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ON

Catholic Teaching

A COMPLETE EXPOSITION OF
CATHOLIC DOCTRINE, DISCIPLINE AND CULT

IN

ORIGINAL DISCOURSES

BY

PULPIT PREACHERS OF OUR OWN DAY

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VOL. IV.

THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH

WITH AN INDEX OF SUBJECTS OF THE COMPLETE WORK

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Vol. IV

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Archbishop of New York

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THE CATHOLIC TEACHING, IN DOCTRINE, DISCIPLINE AND CULT.

Vol. IV. The Liturgy of the Church

I. CEREMONIES: WHY?

BY THE REV. JOHN H. STAPLETON

"They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table to minister unto me, and to keep my ceremonies."—Ezech. xliv, 16.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Ceremonies are not useless symbols; they are a language; have a meaning. Sympathy and understanding necessary to read them aright. Repudiation of the charge of formalism.

II. St. John expressed his vision in terms of ceremonies. Scripture safely sanctions the use of ceremonies.

III. The reasonableness of ceremonies shown: (1) By contrast with Calvinism; (2) action of Moses; (3) of Solomon.

IV. The nature of soul demands external worship or use of ceremonies.

V. Supreme Majesty of God demands external as well as internal worship.

VI. Necessary again by reason of the Grandeur of God, the dignity of Sacrifice and Sacraments. Wisdom of the Church confirmed by her use of ceremonies.

I. Ceremonies in the Catholic Church, while being forms of beauty and an artistic embellishment of worship, are intended and employed as a method of expression, a language. They speak to God and to the believer, not alone by words, as does the orator; nor by varied sounds, as does the musician; nor by colors, as does the painter; nor by graceful movements, as does the actor; but by all these together, and many others. They, therefore, have a meaning; they speak the language which is plain, clear, natural, whose significance is obvious to any one who takes the pains to understand.

To appreciate the value of a language or mode of expression, one must have understanding and sympathy. And it is because the one or the other is wanting that men frequently see in Catholic rites and observances only meaningless, silly and superstitious nonsense. In the revolt against the religion of authority in the sixteenth century, form of worship went the way of dogmatic teaching and the sacramental means of grace; and this result was as natural as that when the root of the tree is destroyed, the beauty of its foliage and blossoms should fall away and perish. All ceremonial is the poetic manifestation of holy thoughts and sentiments which are

inspired by the revealed truths of religion and warmed into fervor by God's sacramental grace. He who has not those divine truths and those means of divine grace cannot have those feelings; and the expression of that which does not exist for him cannot but be meaningless; ceremonies will be for him empty forms, and he will charge us with formalism.

But formalism, that is, the use of the forms, without the substance of religion, is mere idle show and is not religion agreeable to the God who is pleased with no homage that is not interior and spiritual. Our worship is principally internal, but not wholly. It does not consist in rites, but it does not exclude them. And the reasons which we give for not excluding them are of more value than those put forth to prove that we should.

II. The blessed Apostle and Evangelist was given to behold what no human eye ever saw, namely, a perfect worship of the Deity. He was vouchsafed a vision of the throne of the Most High before whom the whole heavenly court bowed down and adored and offered the homage of their dependence. He could not describe, as he saw it, what no human language could express, this perfect celestial worship. Yet the spirit of God urged him to write and tell men what he had seen. "Ah, ah, ah, Lord God, I cannot speak!" he must have exclaimed with the prophet. "Men are not angels; they cannot adore as do the pure spirits, nor can they understand what manner of reverence the dignity of God justly demands and receives from those who minister before Him in the clouds of heaven." But the vision had to be told. And then the inspired seer recalled how every created thing should be employed in praising and exalting "Him above all forever"; "sun and moon, bless the Lord; stars of heaven, lightnings and clouds, mountains and hills, ye works of the Lord, bless Him."

Now, the nearest approach St. John could make to describing the perfect worship of the holy spirits in language intelligible to men, was the use of symbol and ceremony, by bringing under contribution created things, lending them voice and tongue and making them speak in their grand and beautiful fashion. And the nearest approach men could make to imitating the perfection of heavenly worship was thereby shown to be this same use of symbolic expression, beautiful beyond words, simple and striking in its significance, lofty, gorgeous, majestic in the rich, round fulness of its imagery.

And thus he described the function for the edification and instruction of men. There was the rainbow "in sight like an emerald"; the seats and the ancients sitting thereon; white garments, fine linens "which are the justifications of the saints"; they sit, they arise, they adore, they prostrate themselves, they cast themselves on their faces. There is a going forward and backward. There are crowns of gold on their heads, diadems and harps and golden girdles, and palms in their hands. There are lightnings and voices and thunders. Here, seven lamps "which are the seven spirits of God"; there, golden vials "full of odors which are the prayers of the saints." "They have golden censers in their hands and the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before the throne."

There is more, much more; the sacred writer seems almost to exhaust the store of type and figures to express the inexpressible. And here may be found one reason why ceremonial worship has its place in the Catholic Church. The same God thrones in our sanctuary, and at His table we sit, and we minister unto Him, and we are bidden to "keep His ceremonies." The adoration of the hosts of heaven, such as St. John portrays as adequately as it is possible with human means, serves as a model to God's Church in her efforts to honor the infinite majesty of the Creator in a manner as worthy as human means allow. "God endowed all nature," she says, "with a certain gift of tongues. Let then all things speak, each in its native way."

"Let hands and feet and eyes and voice bespeak the attitude of the soul in its reverence and adoration. Let music sing the praises of God; let light beam forth His purity, color His beauty; let prayers ascend with the fragrant clouds of incense; let pomp and magnificence proclaim the infinite power and majesty of the Father. If it becomes the soul to grieve and mourn and sorrow, let dirge and darkness and the somber hues of death assist the faltering lips and tongue to speak out its deep-felt emotions. If the memory of glorious events, or present happiness, bids us rejoice, let the bells ring out; put on the white of gladness, set free the impatient notes of melody while the dancing lights consume themselves as a sacrifice of joyful hanksgiving."

Thus do ceremonies, as they are intended, embellish and adorn the worship of God, forms of beauty and methods of expressing religious ideas, which, though falling short of what is due to the

Creator, as all our efforts must, indicate however that the whole man, with all that he is and has, bows before Him and offers Him an honest tribute and gives forth his best to approximate as closely as possible to a perfect and worthy worship which is due to the Maker of all things.

III. How reasonable is all this! And how strange that reasonable men should desire a religion stripped of natural expression and adornment and think such a religion more excellent than the interpretation St. John gives us of the only true worship! The most perfect antithesis of Catholic ceremonial worship is found in that unlovable and loveless inheritance of Calvin, called Puritanism, that bare, forbidding, ugly thing, almost inhuman in its nakedness, unchristian in its severity and coldness. Calvinistic Puritanism, which purported to be a movement back to the simplicity of Christ, went beyond and proved to be a movement back to the gloom of Judaism. Yet it is remarkable that these self-styled reformers, who seem to have taken over bodily the religion of the Old Testament, failed to read and understand on those very pages what is one of its most conspicuous lessons, namely, the divine approval of the use of rites and ceremonies. Nor is this a vague, general approbation which merely tolerates the use of symbolic expression, but sanction and command which extend to details themselves. There was magnificence in Judaism, albeit a gloomy one; Calvanism took all the gloom with none of the majesty. And the gloom is all the more intolerable since the sun of the divine Christ rose over the world.

"They shall enter into my sanctuary," says Ezechiel, "and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and to keep my ceremonies." Moses legislated at the command of God and under His divine inspiration for the chosen people. "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 'speak to the children of Israel.'" Then follows the letter of the Law. It fills pages and pages of the Pentateuch; it deals with rites and ceremonies; it gives description after description of detailed observances, the use of holy vestments, offerings, the manner of celebrating feasts and fasts, attitudes and processions, the use of oil and water and light and incense. There never was a religion that laid such stress on outward form and sought by such various means to exteriorize religious thought and feeling for the greater glory of God. It was the religion of the Tabernacle. It was after the model of the vision of St. John. And God ordained it.

And the glory of Solomon's temple! Where was ever such

splendor of ceremonial, such magnificence of rites and symbol displayed? The wealth of an empire was laid at the feet of the Almighty, lavished in seeming reckless profusion to carry out the rubrics of the Mosaic legislation and thus embellish the divine services. Now, Solomon, before his turning to strange gods, was certainly a "true adorer," who adored "in spirit and in truth," and his worship was certainly acceptable to Jehovah, just as the rubrics which he followed were written by Moses at the command of Jehovah.

The ceremonial worship of the Old Dispensation was, of course, abolished when Christ inaugurated the new reign of grace, but not all ceremonies and rites were thereby abolished. The principle of religious forms was not affected. In itself it was good, since God had sanctioned it; and could become evil only by the accident of abuse. Not all external worship was condemned, but only such as was vain and superstitious, only such as was not accompanied by, and was not the expression of, and was made the substitute for, "adoration in spirit," the internal worship of the soul.

The prophets spoke to the false worshipers just as Christ spoke to the Pharisees, for the same purpose and end. He rebuked them for observing outward signs, the while "passing over judgment and the love of God." But far from condemning in themselves the ceremonies, He says expressly: "Now these things (the interior worship) you ought to have done and not leave those (the outward signs) undone." Therefore, it is not ceremonies as such that are reproved by prophet or by the God of prophets, but solely those meaningless and empty observances which seek to veil the hypocrisy of unworthy worshipers. On the contrary, "adoration in spirit" is not enough, since the true adorer ought "not to leave undone" the expression of his religious belief and fervor, for thus is to adore in truth—truth being the faithful expression of what the mind conceives.

IV. And it is plain that the soul tends naturally to manifest its genuine religious convictions and sentiments; true affections crave for expression. How rare is the man that can keep concealed the passions that hold sway within him? Can pity be called sincere that never betrays itself by sign or deed? Has parent, child or lover ever failed to give outward token of endearment and devotion? In fact, are not these displays the very proof of genuineness and truth, on the principle that actions speak louder than words? And the

more eloquent, forcible and ample are these manifestations, the more apt is one to be impressed with their honesty.

The fact that all nations offered external worship by ceremonial practices, sacrificial rites and religious observances, that the Jewish religion in this respect was a counterpart of the efforts of the neighboring peoples to honor God, serves to illustrate the point, even without the occurrence of similar phenomena among us in human affairs. Take our national holiday, for instance, when patriotism is proclaimed under the most elaborate forms. Why? Because it is natural. When membership into a society is conferred on an individual, why is solemnity added to the event by mystic signs, rites and ceremonies? These latter might be dispensed with; and they would be, if human nature were different from what it is. We have our inauguration celebrations, conducted with no less pomp and magnificence that the most elaborate religious services. And no people ever honored its magistrates without giving visible testimony, by something more than words, of its consideration and respect.

Why, then, should I be expected to adore inwardly the God who made me and upon whom I depend, and not pay to Him an outward tribute of homage and dependence? How can I help betraying by action as well as by word the feelings of subjection and awe and adoration which seize me in His divine presence? If the heavens, if all nature, if all created things, proclaim in their own way the glory of God, why should not my soul, in its own human and imperfect, but in its naturally expressive, way proclaim the power and goodness of Him who created it? I do not keep my wants to myself, although God sees into my soul and knows of what things I stand in need; but I pray out and tell my wants in words. And it is equally in keeping with my nature, even though my hidden thoughts and feelings are open to the All-seeing One, to give them tongue, as men are wont to do, and to publish them in forms of beauty and expression.

True, false zeal has led peoples astray in honoring God; deceit and hypocrisy have used these means to hide their nakedness. Cruel rites have been adopted, and superstition has found this a rich soil on which to thrive. But the very abuse has proved the use, and the accumulated vagaries and errors of the world and the ages have but served to establish more firmly the principle that sincerity has ever made man give forth in various manners the expression of his inner sentiments; what is within, must come out.

V. The majesty of the Supreme Being whom we honor by religion explains, the divine sanction recorded in Holy Writ justifies, the natural propensity of man for figurative and symbolical utterance necessitates, the use of ceremonial worship. But it would also seem a duty of justice that the service of the Maker should take such forms of expression as the ritual prescribes. We must adore God in spirit, well and good; this is fundamental and essential.

But "the true adorer" must likewise adore Him in truth. Now true religion consists in giving to God not merely what is due to Him, but *all* that is due to Him. He who keeps back a part of the homage that belongs rightfully to Him is a cheat, a deceiver, a false adorer. And what is the whole homage that man owes to his Creator? It is the homage of all that he has and is. And what is man? He is a body and a soul. He is made up of both. Neither one or the other is man, but something very different from man. He is not a spirit, but a human. It is then the whole man—the human composite, not the soul alone, nor the body alone, but both and each—that owes homage to the divine Maker, that should worship Him. Not until he so adores can he be said to render to God all that is His due and be accounted a "true adorer."

With my body, then, I ought to bow and genuflect and make prostration in the divine presence, for my body owes Him reverence. If I walk to and fro and march in procession, my feet pay Him tribute. My hands by gestures, my voice by sounds, express devotion. I strike my breast in contrition. I give my substance that gold and precious ornaments may adorn the sanctuary. In a word, I employ my body, my flesh and bones, as an instrument to honor the God who created me, I make my physical being serve Him and speak by that service the affections and devotions of my soul. The way of the body is not the way of the soul, but the former has its way; it has a language, eloquence, grace; it has a force, majesty and subtlety of expression, which the soul uses to manifest itself, such as no words or sounds can command. And is it not just that these powers should be employed in the service of God? And if they are denied Him, is not this a withholding from Him something that is rightfully His? And he who does this, can he have a just claim to be called a "true adorer"? Men profane God by practises that are evil; men then should honor Him by holy practises. The flesh sins against Him, and the flesh should glorify Him. It is fit and proper that instruments of evil should be brought to undo the

evil which they have wrought, and that where malice abounded, piety and devotion should superabound in compensation. Thus did holy David, the true adorer, act, when he danced before the Ark. "My heart and my flesh," said he, "have rejoiced in the living God." "All my bones shall say: 'Lord, who is like to Thee!'"

VI. Finally, ceremonies are intended by the Church to impress the faithful with a deep sense of the grandeur of God, of the dignity of her Sacrifice and Sacraments, and thus prepare them to reap more abundantly the fruits contained therein; to inculcate mysterious truths and imprint their lesson vividly and indelibly on the minds of her children; and to preserve the memory of the things of the invisible world.

Solemnity is the safeguard of respect; familiarity breeds contempt. Strip human laws and authority of all majesty, and you open the door to irreverence and abuse. Even for God men will lose their wonted awe and His greatness will diminish in their minds, if the visible expression of their belief—ceremonies—does not hedge around the idea of His infinite perfections with symbols and forms of lofty significance. The inherent weakness of human nature to bring all things down to its own level needs to be sustained, and the pomp of ceremonial worship is calculated to effect this.

Religion thus presented is a book with large, clear type, easy to read; it is a picture, simple in outline, rich in coloring, requiring no interpreter to explain its meaning; it is a song full of the melodies of innocent childhood, which linger in the memory; it is a drama true to nature and to art, appealing to the noblest and deepest feelings of the human heart, uplifting the soul, quickening the faculties and imparting a healthy spiritual atmosphere that is favorable to health and growth.

It ought to be remembered that the bulk of mankind are as children in most branches of learning, especially so in matters of religious knowledge. God supplies us with the grace of faith. But religion deals with mysterious truths and an invisible world and moral precepts which are hard of acceptance; and faith, which is a knowledge of these, is very apt to weaken, to fade away, to become cold, vague, superficial, if assistance is not brought through the senses which are the human channels of knowledge. There is as much sentiment and emotion in the average man as reason; he is no less a creature of heart than of mind. He cannot easily understand speculative truths, he cannot follow deep and intricate reason-

ings. His mind is weak, his imagination flighty, his affections easily go astray. He is inconsistent, especially where invisible things are concerned. If, then, you limit the worship of the Divinity to what is purely interior, you leave the soul to itself, deprive it of legitimate means of learning and improvement, and condemn it to sterile inaction, stagnation and death. The religious nature of man is starved if it cannot feed on bright, happy and lovely conceptions of God. It is delighted and assisted by appeals of attractive and suggestive ritual.

Some souls, perhaps, do not require such food as ceremonies furnish; but these are helps even to the most learned, who, with all their learning, remain very much human. Whereas the majority of men are not deeply versed, have not the time to study religion from books, and would not understand if they did. It is likewise idle to say that such religion as addresses itself to the imagination is unworthy. Ceremonies do certainly address themselves to the imagination, but ceremonies are not religion, and by themselves alone would be nothing but mockery. They are to man's belief and purity of heart what the Beautiful is to the True and the Good, their expression, their flowering and blossom. They are the poetry of his faith, springing up from the exuberance of true religious feeling. And the Church uses them because she is bound to speak to man's heart as well as to his intellect, to his memory and imagination. His feelings cannot be overlooked, nor his emotional nature ignored, by a skilful teacher. She addresses herself to every sense in man, and thus, seizing the whole man, seeks to bring him whole and entire to God for whom he was created.

Age—the Church is a very old mother—has its advantages and disadvantages. It leaves behind a record in which men may pick flaws; and the longer the years, the longer the history to supply with material the zeal of unfriendly criticism. The Catholic Church has had to bear with foolish and superstitious children as well as with wicked ones; and her approval and use of ceremonial worship has not been, in some instances, without furnishing at least a pretext for its abuse, here and there, to the shallow minds of pious visionaries. This is the human side; let our enemies make the most of it.

But she is also a very wise mother. "She is," as Cardinal Gibbons says, "enriched with the accumulated experience of centuries. She has studied human nature. She knows what is in man. She takes

hold of him as God made him. She understands how to arouse religion in him." With her ceremonial worship she speaks to him with a thousand tongues, sways every faculty of his soul, penetrates every fiber of his heart with the sweet influence of religion. She suffers him not to be ignorant of or to forget his God and his duty. And she succeeds because she makes a true and legitimate appeal to affections and emotions which are natural to all people and by which men are naturally taught and guided.

II. RELIGION AND ART

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"Thy renown went forth among the nations for thy beauty: for thou wast perfect through my beauty which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God." —Ezech. xvi, 14.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Religion tends to develop all that is in man. Hence, its relation to the beautiful.

II. One of our many desires is for the beautiful—from this arises all art. Religion guides and directs this desire.

III. The Church is beautiful in her mysteries, doctrines, ceremonies, and in the effect on the lives of her children. The evil effect of the Reformation.

IV. The history of art is inseparably connected with the history of the Church.

V. The decay of religion means the decay of the sense of beauty. This point strongly confirmed by history.

VI. A soul in the state of grace the greatest of things of beauty.

I. The first object of religion is to bring us into communication with God and to save our souls: but its influence extends farther and lower than this object, and it affects the whole man in all his relations. Religion brings us into union with God; and God is not only the perfection of our spiritual life, but your intellect, will, imagination, and your whole natural life. We must not think that God is the object of worship only; He is the object of all our faculties and senses: they must all look to Him and serve Him.

God is not only Truth and Law, the rule of our belief and moral action, He is also perfect Beauty. This is one of His divine perfections. God's Beauty will be one of the delights of the blessed in heaven. They will be filled with it as with His Truth and Goodness, through these faculties whose object is beauty. Beauty is also a mark of God's works. Each one, even of His lowest material works, is an object of delight for its beauty to any who cares to study it. "His ways are beautiful ways" (Prov. iii, 17).

The Beautiful is one of the great sources of delight to mankind. It is something intangible and indescribable inhering in things; it is something which is different from their material composition. We cannot analyze it. It is a certain harmony and proportion, variety

and unity, which fills us with delight as we contemplate it. Whether we consider a melody, or a series of sounds, a mountain chain, or a problem in mathematics, a poem, a thunderstorm, an invention, there is a something which is the same in all, which appeals to our sense of beauty and gives us exquisite pleasure. It is some gleam of divine beauty reflected in the creature.

It might be thought that Religion has no concern with the science of the beautiful, that it is too austere to bend to such frivolity, and that earthly beauty is rather the material of self-indulgence and sin. Not so. The perception and enjoyment and production of beauty are closely connected with God and religion. Religion is to us the source of the highest beauty as well as of truth and morality. The text speaks of the beauty of Jerusalem, which is the figure of the present Jerusalem, the true Kingdom of God on earth. She, too, is renowned for her beauty, and is made perfect with the beauty of God, which is communicated to her. Let us consider the desire which God has given us for the Beautiful, and see how it is met by Religion and gratified.

II. We are full of desires. These are capacities for action or enjoyment implanted in us by God. These natural cravings are good in themselves, and are intended to be gratified under due conditions, except so far as God may call us, at times or totally, to self-renunciation. However, through our own perversity or that which we inherit, we often exercise these desires on forbidden objects, or selfishly, for our own interest and pleasure apart from God. There is great danger of these desires becoming evil and leading us to sin and eternal loss. They need to be exercised then with caution and self-restraint.

One of our chief desires is rooted in the imagination and aims at the enjoyment of the Beautiful; and this is the origin of Art. We try to copy for our possession something beautiful in nature or in our own imagination. This is a faculty peculiar to man. The beasts do not share it; they seek food, shelter, warmth, and there is an end of it; of beauty, as of truth and law, they have no apprehension. Among men this faculty is universal. Early savage man engraved reindeer and horses on his implements of bone, and adorned himself with teeth of animals or beads of stone. Infants delight in beauty of color, and cry for anything bright and pretty. Savages show an acute sense for color and form in their ornaments of beads, and porcupine quills, and skins. Cave-dwellers have left colored pictures

of men and animals on the walls of their abodes. The poorest people, indifferent almost to comfort, will adorn their hovels with bits of china and glaring pictures. The sense of beauty and of art, although crude, is common to them all. God is the ultimate object of this craving. The more nearly we approach to the likeness of God, the more shall we participate in this beauty, the more we shall be able to appreciate it and reproduce it. Religion brings men more under the influence of God, not only as the Truth and Law of goodness, but also as Beauty. It guides our desire and leads us to its fulfilment.

III. The Church of God is beautiful. "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is no spot in thee" (Cant. iv, 7). She is so, as being one of the chief of God's works, His special dwelling, and the manifestation of His perfections to men. Her doctrines are beautiful. The mysteries of Religion, the perfections of God, the life of Jesus Christ, the glory of His blessed Mother, the sacred Scriptures, have been the continual delight of thousands. The solemnities and ceremonies of divine worship in the Catholic Church, how impressive they are for their stateliness and beauty! Those who have come out of curiosity or hostility have often felt as if they had seen a glimpse of heaven. Whether splendid or poor, whether celebrated under the dome of the noblest Church in Christendom, or in a wooden hut, or a cavern beneath the ground, the worship of the Church is always stately. She cannot be frigid or lifeless on the one hand, or grotesque and fanatical on the other. Her action, like that of God, is always beautiful.

The Catholic religion does far more than any other to elevate and ennoble its followers' characters and beautify their lives. Among the simple, the poor, the suffering, in remote corners of the world, among an industrious and Christian peasantry, there is found a spirit of contentment, courtesy, faith, patience, purity and fervor, which go to make up the most lovely of spectacles. Religion is the only antidote to that sordid selfishness, meanness, cruelty and lust, which stain our civilization with such unloveliness and produce such hideous results. It is being discovered that the creation of wealth degrades the workers, that mere knowledge and industry cannot elevate them, and that the sight of artistic and beautiful things is necessary to nourish the imagination and bring light into their lives. Of old the Catholic Church supplied this need of the mind with its sculptured cathedrals, its pictured glass, its wealth of

statuary and painting, its histories of the saints, its festivals and bright processions, pulpit eloquence, and moving strains of music. The Reformation in some lands swept all this clean away, condemned it for the very reason which is its great merit, that its vividness and splendor appealed so much to the artistic sense and gratified the imagination. Time has brought its revenge. Legal holidays, popular concerts, and galleries of art, are an attempt, all too tardy, to supply the toiler with some few crumbs of the banquet of beauty which the Church of old dispensed abundantly to all.

I must quote in substance the words of a distinguished non-Catholic author on this point: "One method by which Christianity has labored to soften the characters of men has been through the imagination. Our imaginations affect our moral character, and, in the case of the poor especially, the cultivation of this part of our nature is of inestimable importance. Rooted to a single spot, excluded from most of the interests that animate the minds of other men, condemned to constant and plodding labor, their whole natures would have been hopelessly contracted, were there no sphere in which their imaginations could expand. Religion is the one romance of the poor. It alone extends the narrow horizon of their thoughts, supplies the images of their dreams, allures them to the supersensual and ideal. . . . It is the peculiarity of the Christian types that, while they have fascinated the imagination, they have also purified the heart." He then recalls some of the externals of Catholic worship and concludes, "More than any spoken eloquence, more than any dogmatic teaching, they transform and subdue his character" (Lecky).

IV. As Religion is so closely connected with uncreated Beauty and with the Beautiful in most of its forms, so it has been the chief agent in originating and inspiring Art. Faith has supplied noble images to the mind, and breadth and dignity to the characters of men, and these qualities have expressed themselves outwardly in architecture, painting, poetry, music, etc. From these arts, first employed in the service of Religion, all modern Art has sprung. Painting, decoration and sculpture began in the Roman catacombs with the endeavor to express Christian hope in symbols on the martyr's tomb, and Christian reverence around the Altar of the Holy Sacrifice; and they were brought to perfection by the need of representing the doctrines of religion on the walls of Churches for the instruction of the faithful. The requirements of a new class of

buildings for religious purposes created the glorious architecture of the Middle Ages, more living and progressive than the massive Egyptian, the stern Doric, and the elegant Corinthian; more capable of yielding in its details to the varying fancy of each nationality; more capable of development on many different lines, ranging from rude massiveness to fair delicacy, but always marked by truth and perfect taste. Musical notation was invented by Pope St. Gregory the Great, and later the simple but exquisite hymns of the liturgy were one by one composed. Popes and bishops were always the chief patrons of Art. Monasteries were the home of art as well as of piety and learning. Churches sprung up over Europe, each of which was a museum of beauty open for the free enjoyment and culture of all. The walls, the windows, the pavement, the altars, the tombs and the shrines were examples of the best that human taste has ever wrought in stone and wood, embroidery and metal, glass and precious gems. All this was no mere extravagance or luxury, or an artificial or enthusiastic movement, but it was the natural and spontaneous expression of high and noble feelings. Faith and love, generosity and awe, the sense of man's sin and God's majesty, and of the truth and eternity of religion, must of necessity find expression for their intensity and their force in works vast, beautiful, and durable. "I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of the house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth" (Ps. xxv, 8). The spirit of these words, which God poured forth on those who labored on the Temple and Tabernacle of old, we may well believe to have been infused into the souls of the medieval artists, that they might be able to translate, not only their own devotion, but even a reflection of uncreated Beauty into the works of their hands.

So much is Art bound up with the Catholic Church that no history of Art or any portion of it could be written without giving the largest place to Catholic doctrines and customs, to popes and saints. A philosophy of Art would be chiefly a history of one aspect of religion, and of the widespread degradation which follows the decline of its influence. When intolerant atheism shall advance so far as to remove from the streets of cities, the walls of museums, and the shelves of libraries all traces of religious art, as it has already attempted to remove all traces of religion and morality from the school-room, it is not too much to say that ninety-nine per cent. of all the genius, and one hundred per cent. of the refining influence of art, will have perished. When artist or poet wishes to depict the

beauty of worship or religious feeling, where else does he seek inspiration but in the solemn High Mass of a Catholic cathedral, or among the crowd who sit round the confessional, or in the daily life of the priest or sister of charity? When the tourist in a foreign land seeks distraction from his year-long toil, in pursuit of the beautiful in nature or in man's handiwork, where does he find the chief center of attraction?

He goes not to the churches of his own religion, but to a Church whose doctrines he disbelieves, and whose worship he scoffs at; doing it unwilling homage by recognizing in it a sense of life, truth of devotion, majesty, of worship, beauty of workmanship, and by yielding to the feelings of awe which these things enforce. It is strange that so many can admit the Catholic Church to be the highest expression on earth of religious beauty; *i. e.*, of divine beauty, both material and mental, and yet fail to recognize in her the highest expression of divine truth and law. For the True, the Good, and the Beautiful are one and indivisible.

V. This suggests another thought; that, where religious truth has failed, there will the sense of beauty be impaired and its ideal lowered in the course of time. This age is far superior to any preceding in wealth, knowledge, mechanical appliances, and general cultivation. Our great works surpass in many ways those of the Ages of Faith. How wonderful are our railways, bridges, hotels, warehouses! For utility they are supreme; but not one is marked by the extraordinary beauty of ancient times. Town-halls, castles, streets, churches especially, had a beauty now irrecoverable. Architecture was never so overwhelming for its power and gracefulness as in the old Catholic churches. A great building reflects, as does a great book, the mind and qualities of its architect, as he reflects these of his age. The qualities of the times of faith have perished, so we can no longer produce their effects. How melancholy, as a rule, are our attempts to revive an old style of architecture; they are no longer the spontaneous expression of an original mind, but are forced and lifeless imitations, mechanically made; they are like a stolid wax figure with its smooth countenance and fixed expression, by the side of a living face full of character, brightness, and emotion. There are few of these medieval revivals which are not marked by inconsistency and inharmony of parts, servile imitation or glaring bad taste. Let there be a vast competition of designs and selection of one by a committee, let cheapness be one of the

points of merit, and the result will be one of those abominations and eyesores that disfigure our modern cities.

Enter an old Catholic church in an old Catholic city and you are awed into mute wonder. It speaks to you of the eternal, the ancient of days, the immutable: it seems as if its multifarious beauty could never be grasped, and it is certain that man, as at present, could not again produce its like. You feel that it is truly the house of God and the gate of Heaven, a blessed vision of eternal peace. But if it be one that has passed from the Catholic to some reformed Church, what a picture of desolation it presents. It is a desert of monotony and inutility, a storehouse for incongruous tombstones. It is a corpse. That sense of life which comes from the presence of the Most Holy with the beacon lamp and kneeling worshipers is absent. It is the Jerusalem of the captivity. "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people: how is the sovereign of the Gentiles become as a widow? . . . The ways of Sion mourn because there are none that come to the solemn feast: all her gates are broken down. . . . The enemy hath put out his hand to all her desirable things, for she hath seen the Gentiles enter into her sanctuary, of whom thou gavest command that they should not enter into thy Church" (Lam. i, 1, 4, 10). It is just the same with these altar-pieces, triptychs, chalices, reliquaries and vestments, removed by vandal governments from their natural home to picture galleries and museums. They have lost half their beauty; they are no longer parts of a living beautiful body, but anatomical specimens. How sad and useless they are, taken forever from the service of God, put under glass shades, turned into mere objects of curiosity, from being part of the eternal worship of the Church and aids to faith and virtue!

In painting, too, the soul is gone when faith has ceased. The old monk-artist sought inspiration in prayer and fasting, before taking his brush to portray the Virgin Mother and her Divine Infant. He sought to make men realize spiritual truths and move them to purity and love. The modern artist, pipe in mouth, works from questionable models to make a reputation or to fill his pockets. Modern painters are undoubtedly superior in technical knowledge, in manipulation, archeological correctness of detail; they will reproduce exactly the scenery amidst which our Lord lived, the particulars of His costume, the type of face then prevalent: but the figures are not divine, all spiritual beauty has fled. Turn from

these to the frescoes of Giotto, or the rude mosaic of Ravenna: anatomy, perspective, details are all astray, but you have seen in these works a spiritual life. You feel as if you were actually before the stern, all-seeing, impartial Judge of Mankind, or as if you had seen, face to face, the most pure and most blessed of women. You may see young men, as they come suddenly into the presence of the Madonna di San Sisto, check their laughter, snatch off their hats, and stand silent and motionless, as though they saw a real glimpse of heaven through the parted veil.

A Protestant Dutch School of Art arose some couple of centuries ago. Light and shade portraits, domestic life, tavern orgies, dead game, pots and pans, texture of tapestries and furs they rendered with unexampled perfection. But when they forgot the limits of their powers and tried to soar to the higher level of religious ideas, their incapability was shown by the grotesque and soulless results. Turning to modern days, we may compare ordinary exhibitions of sculpture with the delicate, lovely, and touching conceptions in the great cemeteries of Genoa and Florence. We may see, too, in the undue sentimentalism and ingenious filthiness of academies and salons, how Art can fall when the purifying and ennobling influence of faith is cast off.

Again, the stage is a branch of Art with which the Church has little to do, except to watch it with suspicion, and occasionally to pronounce a warning. Part of it is respectable and really belongs to the domain of high Art. But it has often been a powerful instrument of immorality, and its associations are not always lovely. Yet the Church originated the modern drama in her miracle plays, which still survive in the Passion Plays among remote mountains. These furnish a rare occasion of observing the association of Religion with this form of Art. After feeling the thrilling effect produced by untutored mountaineers, whose chief qualifications are their devotion and belief, and who receive holy Communion by way of preparing for the play, one can understand how much moral power and spiritual and artistic beauty there may be in the drama.

VI. Ruskin has remarked that the decay of a country begins in its Art, and its prosperity is measured by its possession and appreciation of fine artists. The character of its art and the direction of its taste are, of course, closely allied with its national character, in its decline or improvement. I may, perhaps, go farther. still, and suggest that the art of a nation, and especially its religious

art, may throw a sidelight on the character of its religion and of its religiousness. For instance, the numerous indications of the approach and future absorption of an important section of Protestants into the Catholic Church are much reinforced by the sight of the work done of late years in the restoring and refurnishing of old churches, and the building of new ones. When one sees the scrupulousness and consciousness of the new work and its perfect harmony with the old, the conclusion is forced on one that a similar spirit has presided over both and that those who have so perfect a sense of beauty cannot be very far off from a perfect sense of truth. On the other hand, we find that a weakening of the Religious Sense, as during the Reformation, is accompanied by a decline in art and loss of esthetic sensibility. And one is tempted to fear that where art, and especially ecclesiastical art, is flimsy, finical, untrue, mean and cheap, there will be a corresponding weakness in the sense of Religion. To-day there are two different tendencies that are daily becoming wider and more defined. On the one hand, there is a revival of severe taste and real beauty in Art: on the other, there is an Art which prostitutes the advantages of cultivation to the representation of all that is hideous in vice and that panders to the filthiest passions.

This correspondence of Art with Religion is not complete and definite. A holy man will not of necessity be a man of taste; and a correct artistic taste does not prove the truth of a man's belief or the excellence of his morals. It can only be said that on a large scale the general tendency of an age will be broadly in the same direction; towards Truth, Goodness and Beauty jointly, or away from them. This can be recognized by comparing nations or periods, and not by a comparison of individuals.

VII. Great is the beauty of the material works of God; greater still is the beauty of the works of human intelligence directed by God; greatest of all, the spiritual beauty of a soul in the state of grace. This kind of beauty does not vary according to our tastes. This is essential beauty coming direct from God, and a participation in His. "Thou are perfect through my beauty which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God" (Ezech. xvi, 14). Our Lord Jesus Christ possesses this by His nature in infinite perfection. His blessed and most pure Mother possesses the highest degree of communicated beauty. The contemplation of these has raised a high ideal before the eyes of men, which has been attained by apostles,

martyrs, confessors, and virgins. Their zeal, their labors, their purity, their self-renunciation, their lives and their deaths are the most beautiful things among the many beauties of this world. Below these there are thousands of beautiful lives grouped or dotted about amidst the unutterable abomination of sinful lives. This is not the beauty of material form, or of cleverness, or of wit, or of fashion; they are not the lives of statesmen, of the successful, the wealthy, the ambitious; but they are hidden lives unknown beyond a small circle, lives spend in toil, in suffering, in ignorance, perhaps, in poverty, lowly in the eyes of the world and unenviable, but lovely in God's sight for their faith and love, humility and obedience, patience and resignation. Of such it is written "O, how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory: for the memory thereof is immortal: because it is known both with God and men" (Wisd. iv, 1).

III. VESTMENTS

BY THE REV. G. LEE, C.S.SP.

"And thou shalt make a holy vesture for Aaron, thy brother, for glory and for beauty."—Ex. xxviii, 2.

SYNOPSIS.—Scripture messages abidingly significant: even where words expressed temporary injunction, their spirit undyingly pervasive. Levitical passages still inspire the religious-minded. Divine condescension in prescribing externals of worship, down to details of dress. God's lead followed by the Church: her mysteries of sanctification betokened. Her priests and people much influenced by altar vestments, which, like Aaron's, are for holiness, for glory, for beauty.

I. Vestments holy, blessed, sanctified. Tribute to God's holiness: to Him. Once used, ever sacred: Apostles' robes: papal restrictions. Holy, for priest's sake: shown in blessings, in vesting prayers: his sacred panoply. In contact with Altar: like Garment whose touch was health. Priestly holiness, people's preservation.

II. Vestments of glory—in the ancient ministry, still more in the new. Kingly priesthood, kingly people. Splendor of church functions: gold, silk, linen. Mystery of God's taking glory from what we wear. His example: our wise ambition. The Cenacle: the Lord's robes.

III. Vestments for beauty: naturally. God the first Author of Beauty; the most Beautiful of the Sons of Men: the beauty of holiness. In sanctuaries, all comely and exquisite: tint, form, allegory. Missal prescriptions: integra, pulchra, munda. Suited to season and ceremonial.

Conclusion.—Catholic's understanding of Vestments: associations, interest, edification. Desire to supply them; to be represented by something near Holy of Holies; to have part with wisest and best. Reported and credible action of worthy Mother of the great High Priest.

Holy Scripture, being the word of God, always remains. Its spirit is undying and all-pervasive. Even where its detailed enactments were temporary or purely ceremonial, and so far have lapsed, the reasons underlying them continue to enlighten and oblige. God spoke: an echo must ever be in the minds and hearts of His attentive creatures. Ministries and sacrifices that were to cease would naturally imply the cessation of their particular rites and regulations; yet it could never be again that people should publicly worship God without being influenced by the ways He had once ordained for His special service. This fact it is, my brethren, that makes the Levitical passages of the Old Testament such inspiring reading for the religious-minded of all ages.

Circumspection was required in approaching the Infinite, the All-

holy. Nothing appertaining to Him could be without its sacred solemnity, or ever could become commonplace. Indeed, even the blissful angels, ever standing before His Face, in all the glory of their spotlessness, do not put off for a moment their rapturous trembling. How poor mortals should draw near Him, certainly needed to be told by Himself. He did tell it, and with a wealth of detail that is simply adorable. He descended or condescended—or whatever we should call it upon His part—to mark minutely how they should be appareled when they ventured to minister at His altar.

Such action of our Lord and Master has a significance for us Catholics, my brethren, as deep as it is pleasantly instructive. We have an Altar at which not even those who served the Temple might eat; and our God-guided Church surrounds and safeguards it with a strictness of heavenly prudence. Its ministers are to be clad in garments which help both to express and to maintain the dignity of their sacred functions: there is to be a mystery of sanctification in their very dress. And the common faithful are taught and moved by these externals of divine worship more than they or others may imagine. All your life, my brethren, at least from early childhood, the *vestments* have been to most of you an object familiarly dear and dearly sacred. They were associated with your own best moments, with the days you marked as the greatest; but they seemed so naturally in their place that perhaps you never gave them much special consideration. Yet they are worth considering. Like Moses, the friend of God, you may regard yourselves as having been ordered to make and having made for your brother Aaron a holy vesture for glory and for beauty: holiness, glory, beauty.

I. That priestly vestments are holy and meant for holiness is very plain to the instructed Catholic. The Church blesses them, with a blessing which she makes so necessary that if they were not blessed she would not regard them as vestments at all. She does, in blessing them, a thing unusual for her: she forces her language, to ask on them an immense blessing, an *ingens benedictio,* that they may be all purified and sanctified and consecrated. Three times does she utter such words over them, even appealing to God, the Creator and Sanctifier of all things, to bless them with His own mouth: *tuo ore proprio,* she ventures to say.

'Tis, of course, on God's account that she so acts. He is holy. What she brings near Him must first be sanctified. To us, my brethren, the holiness of God is a mystery; but we can somewhat

perceive that it consists in His being all to Himself, the Only Good. Similarly, creatures are holy, in proportion as they are to God; and things merely material can bear that hallowing. Her priestly vestments the Church devotes and dedicates to the worship of God, to the service of His mysteries, even of the Mystery of the Altar, the inclusive Mystery which sums up all that we know and have of Him. She will not have them used for other purposes, nor given another signification.

Historians may discuss and dispute the time and the circumstances in which the Christian priesthood began to use an altogether distinctive dress at the altar; but they have to agree that what was so used was held as sacred. The cloak which St. Paul seemed so careful about was early reported to have been his sacrificing robe. The same character was attributed to Thomas the Apostle's mantle, long venerated at Rome. The centuries of persecution were not a time for elaborating ceremony or dress, yet pontiffs of the period are on record for restrictions in the use of the same garments at the altar and away from it, or by one order of the clergy and by another. The first pope who enjoyed the freedom of peace, St. Sylvester, introduced an improvement that still holds its ground: our sleeved dalmatics were prescribed by him. St. Jerome mentions the white robes of all ministers within the Sanctuary, as ordinary and long-established. Thence down through the centuries there are adaptations to place, or rite, or monastic or secular garb; but the insistence on sacred vestments, on their sacred significance and sacred employment, goes on ever increasing. Holy to the Lord, is the more and more exclusive mark on them, as on those who are privileged to wear them.

And here, my brethren, I have to call your attention to a point that may somewhat escape your notice—though when well considered it is found most practical. The holiness of the priestly vestments is very much for the priest himself. In blessing them the Church asks that the wearer may be fit and apt for so sacred a ministry; but she also implores that he may be filled with the grace of the Holy Ghost, rendered perseveringly agreeable to God, clad with chastity here and with immortality hereafter. 'Tis particularly in the words she puts on his lips as he takes each vestment that we divine her maternal solicitude for her priest in person. All scriptural sanctities are invoked on him. The amice, with which you may have seen him first cover his head and then tuck out of view all trace of his

secular dress, is to be to him an unfailing helmet of salvation. Made white like his alb, and, in the very Blood of the Lamb, he is to be fitted for joys eternal. With the binding of his cincture, concupiscence is extinguished. His maniple tells of the exultant harvesting that will follow his tearful sowing; for of him and his fellow-laborers is it prophetically true that "going they went and wept, casting their seeds. But coming they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves" (Ps. 125). His Stole, the special ensign of the priesthood that is forever, proclaims his right to Everlasting Life and its beatitude; while his Chasuble, though bearing a Cross before and behind, is but the sweet yoke and light burden of the Master who gives both the merit and the crown. So it is with these and with the other sacred vestures he may have to put on. Panoplied round with them, and with the dispositions they suppose, he is invulnerable to the assaults of every malign spirit. Even human malignity had often to refrain; for Law recognized a peculiarly punishable atrocity in assaults on the vested priest. To the devout faithful there is an attractive sacredness in the robes which come in contact with the Altar of God; for they vividly recall that Garment, the touch of whose hem was health and holiness. And as far, my brethren, as holy vesture can announce and preserve the sanctity of the wearer, the same faithful have good reason to rejoice. Assuredly they may be said to need nothing, after the grace of God, more than they need the holiness of their priests. God's ordination carries with it that sanction and consequence. 'Tis markedly the races and nations most devotedly attached to the chaste sacredness of the priestly character who have best maintained the worship of the Son of the Virgin, the Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech.

II. Another characteristic of vestments is that they are made for glory. "A holy vesture for Aaron thy brother for glory" was said to Moses, and the Catholic Church perpetuates the idea. She knows that her "ministry is glorious"; that her ministers are more than kings; that her people, because even of their distant participation in the divine priesthood, are kingly people. Hence, would she have the outward signs and habiliments of the priestly character and the priestly office held and shown as glorious. They, moreover, add much to the splendor of her ceremonial. 'Tis greatly owing to the richness of sacred vesture that all court pageant pales before her cathedral functions. And poor though she may be, she will have her priestly vestments comparatively rich. If they cannot be all of gold

—the finest of the minerals—they must be of silk, the most delicate of animal products, or of linen, the purest texture afforded by the kingdom of the plants. She approves no other material; and in her high fastidiousness she has God's own leading to guide her. When He was ordering vesture for His Levitical order of priests He said it should be of "gold, violet and purple, and scarlet twice dyed, and fine twisted linen" (Ex. xxviii, 6).

Here, again, my brethren, is that mystery of condescension, that the great Creator of all things should make much of what we use in His service, regarding even what we wear when we appear before Him. But, as we read, He is pleased to clothe the grass of the field—that is to-day and to-morrow is cast into the oven—with more glory than ever shone in Solomon's kingly raiment. He is Himself a very abyss of eternal unspeakable glory. His people's glory is the very name David and Paul give Him. Our Lord is proposed to our worship as the substantial brightness of His Father's glory: even as Man He is glorified by the Father and the Holy Ghost. Yet the poor things we may bring to the Sanctuary are accepted as glorious and for glory! Surely, Catholics are wisely generous when they deck the Lord's ministers with all that pleases Him, as indicated by the pleasure of His infallible Church. 'Tis finally for no glory but His.

Nor need we be told that not in external things is He best glorified—though they, too, proclaim and further His glory. We, of course, keep in mind the Son's example: that doing His Father's will is seeking His glory. And, as regards ourselves, we are aware that His will is our sanctification. But we also read that when it came to the celebration of the divine Bridegroom's own great Supper, He had made provision for a vast laid-out chamber—the *coenaculum magnum stratum* of the Gospel, suggesting much ornamentation. And 'tis right to notice that the Lord Himself changed His robes for the washing of the disciples' feet in the hall and for the ministry at table of His most glorious Body and Blood. To His Spirit, too, abiding in the Church, must be attributed the magnanimity to be lavishly splendid when worship in enhanced. Magnificence in His service, even in ceremonial, is glorious to Him and to us. The blessed Magdalen, whose fame is wide as time and space, gave us the pattern when for His honor she broke the costly vase and spilled the precious ointment.

III. Besides the glory which Scripture mentions as the purpose of fine vestments, there is added another end which some of

you, my brethren, may be less ready to recall. They are made for beauty: "for glory and for beauty," 'tis repeated. On reflection, we must drop all surprise that the beautiful should be required in God's worship and at His altar. He is revealed to us as the Beauty ever ancient and ever new. He is named the First Author of Beauty; and with Beauty He has so filled His creation that unbelievers are inexcusable when in the works they do not recognize the Workman. "With whose beauty," says the Scripture, "if they, being delighted, took them to be gods: let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they" (Wis. xiii, 3). Our Lord was to be recognized by His being the Most Beautiful of the Sons of Men, the Adonai, the Day-Star. One, also, of the attractions to His perfect service, to being holy as He the Lord our God is holy, was to be and is "the beauty of holiness." So that, far from being strange to see the beautiful employed in divine worship, it is put there most rightly and naturally. It was fittingly prescribed there. In the ritual both of the Old and of the New Testaments great care is evidenced to keep the ungainly, the uncomely, the repulsive, at a distance from the Sanctuary. A taste, exquisite or heavenly, has in marvelous manner combined most perfect forms and most harmonious tints. Even this world's artists have had to acknowledge that the Temple is the home of the beautiful; that Art, indeed, never had true development apart from religion. In the apparently minor advantage of dress—of the representative value of religious over secular attire—every painter and every sculptor will emphasize the difference.

Of this source of beauty the Church, my brethren, has wisely profited. She arrays her ministers incomparably. 'Tis not alone that the symbolism of her vestments is beautiful, each one conveying its sacred allegory: the colors and shapes are also finely artistic. Vestments made and kept as she would have them, are beautiful to look at as well as to wear. At gorgeousness she may not aim; but she cherishes simple splendor. The vision of Aaron and his sons with the ephod of divers colors and the gem-studded rational, with the tunics fringed with pomegranates and golden bells, is not lost to her. It is still in her mind, even when she models herself most on the seamless robe woven from the top throughout, made once the prize of dice-throwing; or on the white garment and the purple, passingly the badges of insult and mockery, but always the true ensigns of purity and royalty.

But be her vestments ornamental or not, they are always to be

whole, and clean, and beautiful: *integra, et decenter munda, ac pulchra,* commands her liturgy. Like Nature's garb, they are to be perfect of their kind, and highly characteristic. The Violet robes of penitence become her, as do the White of joy; while no less fitting is the Red of sacrifice and the Green of hope. Even the Black of sympathy, with the sorrows of her bereaved children—beginning from the mourning of the Mother of the Crucified—can be variously in taste. So that taken in themselves and in their uses, of her sacerdotal garments it may be said, as of those of Aaron and his sons, that they are truly and indeed made for beauty.

Now, my brethren, your consideration of Church vestments should have some practical result. They please you, as they do all devout Catholics; they should also instruct and edify you. Keep in mind their significance, and recall it when the opportunity offers. Then, too, if you appreciate the excellent wisdom of their use, might you not be ambitious to have some special part in supplying them? The privilege is so slight. To have brought into the Sanctuary, into our true Holy of Holies, something of yours by which God may mercifully remember you, is an occasion of many blessings. Moreover, a hand in furnishing what is worn at the Altar, elevates the mind and associates us with the best and the wisest of God's servants. When the first vestments were to be supplied the divine announcement was made: "Thou shalt speak to all the wise of heart, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's vestments, in which he being consecrated shall minister to me" (Ex. xxviii, 3). The Church also recalls in one of her blessings that altar raiment was made by *Mary.* Our first thought is of the Blessed Virgin, but we can easily perceive that the reference is to Miriam, the sister of Moses. The Mother of the Lord need not, however, be left out of our thoughts. In her "Life" by the Venerable Abbess of Agreda—a treatise marked by sweetest revelations and superhuman orthodoxy—there occurs the following: "For the celebration of the Unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass, the prudent Mother knew that it was fitting the Apostles and priests should have a dress different from those used in ordinary life, that they should have a vesture of mystic significance. In that mind she, with her own hands, made priestly vestments for use at the Altar, thus originating this sacred custom and ritual in the Church. And though these robes were not of the same shape as the ones used by the Roman Church, yet neither were they very different. Later they were reduced to the present

form. But the material was more like; for Our Lady made them of linen and rich silk, from the alms and gifts offered her. While working at these vestments, stitching and adorning them, she was always either kneeling or standing. She did not confide them to other sacristans, except to the Angels who waited on her and helped her in all she was doing. So she kept the vestments and all that served at the Altar in incredible beauty and spotlessness. They all passed from her hands with a heavenly fragrance that inflamed the souls of the ministers of religion" (viii, 586).

Considering the ministry of life accomplished at our altars, we may admit that the work described was worthy of the Mother of God. Could we esteem divine things, especially the Divine Sacrifice, as she undoubtedly did, we might learn to imitate her in some little ways and so begin really to magnify her Son, with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

IV. ADVENT

BY DOM BERNARD HAYES, O.S.B.

I. INTRODUCTION.—(1) World's history: The Fall and Preparation for the Redeemer. (2) This is typical of the history of the human soul. (3) Advent is the time of penance and preparation for Christ's second coming, set apart by the Church.

II. HISTORY OF ADVENT: (1) Of its discipline of penance; (2) of its Liturgy.

III. CHARACTER OF ADVENT:—

(1) Penance: Shown by { *(a) Discipline.* / *(b) Liturgy.* { *(1) Ceremonial.* / *(2) Prayer.* }

(2) Expectation of Christ: Shown by Liturgy of the Divine Office and Mass.

IV. APPLICATION.—Sin leaves its effects, which must be remedied by purification of soul that Christ may dwell in us.

V. CONCLUSION.—Christ shall come and overcome Satan.

I. (1) In the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, my brethren, we read how the Spirit of God moved over the void and the darkness, and there was light; and the firmament of heaven, the sun, moon and stars appeared; the waters and the land were made distinct, and all green herbs, and trees, the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field were created; and last of all, the King of Creation—Man. "God saw all things that He had made and they were very good" (Gen. i, 31). It was a world of sunshine and of happiness. Adam and Eve, hand in hand, passed through this paradise, in looks divine after the image of their glorious Maker. Then sin and death rose from hell and worked destruction; and innocence, which knew no ill, fled; and guilty shame drove forth just confidence and native righteousness. The earth trembled and the skies wept; the thunders muttered and darkness reigned, and "Cherubim with flaming sword kept the way of the tree of life": the dread curse of God had fallen. But at that very moment of black despair the dawn of a future hope appeared, for the curse fell also on the serpent tempter; and God said "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (Gen. iii, 15). As the dawn gradually brightens till the sun

rises in his all-conquering majesty, driving the shades of night in confusion before him, till the whole heavens and the world are flooded with splendor, life and joy, so do we find in the Old Testament this first gleam of light in the darkness grows even clearer and brighter in psalm and prophecy and trust in the hearts of men, till the Orient from on high visited His people and the Sun of Justice ruled the world. In the Book of Genesis the promise is vague: "In Thy seed all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. xxviii, 14). But Isaias with greater clearness foretells: "Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel" (vii, 14), and cries: "Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and wouldst come down!" (lxiv, 1) and yet again: "Drop down dew, ye heavens from above, and let the clouds rain the Just: let the earth be opened and bud forth a saviour."

Of David the Psalmist we are told in the Acts of the Apostles ii, 30: "David was a prophet, and he knew that God had sworn to him, that of the fruit of his loins one should sit upon his throne." The Psalms of David are full of Jesus Christ, and Jesus made frequent use of them, particularly upon the Cross, and applied their words to Himself. Thus after His resurrection, Jesus told His followers that "all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me." Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures (Luke xxiv, 66). Thus did men turn their faces to the east during those long 4,000 years of darkness, looking ever for the coming of the Sun of Justice who would conquer death and sin—sad years of longing in which men humbled their souls in penance and cried for their Redeemer with prayer which came from the depth of their hearts.

(2) This history is typical of the history of the human soul. For in each soul we find the darkness of original sin, the dawn of growing light, and a real coming of the Saviour. This growth of light and life in the soul till the full light of day is attained is what is meant by the second coming of Jesus Christ. The Sun of Justice shines now upon the land so long a waste of wintry barrenness. But each plot of ground must be tilled in the sweat of the brow before it is fit to bear the crops of God; and the flowers and fruits of virtue are the rewards of human toil. This preparation of soul is our work upon earth. The soul must be cleared by degrees of all noxious weeds; it must be sheltered from the blighting winds which

sweep across the frozen plains which are turned away from the warmth of the vivifying sun; it must once more become an Eden where God may come and walk with His children.

(3) Behold, my brethren, two fundamental ideas of the Christian life: the work and influence of Christ upon the soul, and the self-denying preparation and earnest expectation of the creature. The Church of God recalls the former to us by the annual feast of Christmas and the latter by the season of Advent. Where could there be found a better example of preparation and expectation than the long ages preceding the first coming of Christ, during which holy men by penance and prayer made the dawn of promise grow to the bright day of fulfilment? Therefore the Church, in her divinely guided wisdom, opens each ecclesiastical year with four weeks of expectation and penance, which are called the weeks of "Advent" or the "Coming." They are supposed to represent those four thousand years which preceded the first coming of Christ. During these weeks the Church teaches her children to look forward to a second coming of Christ in their own souls at Christmas time and to prepare themselves as did the prophets and holy men of old who, by their prayers and penance, brought down the Saviour to this stricken world. Let us then try to know all we can about this great Advent season, so that we may acquire the true spirit of the time from our Mother, the Church, and thus worthily prepare our hearts, so that when Christmas comes Jesus may find the doors of Bethlehem open to Him when He seeks where to be born. With this end, we shall consider the history and character of Advent and its application to our own souls.

II. It is impossible to say, my dear brethren, with any certainty when this season of preparation was first instituted. All the evidence seems to show that it originated in the Western Church, but there does not seem to have been any uniform practise to begin with. Now we may regard Advent in two ways: (*a*) as a time of preparation by penance for the coming of Christ, and (*b*) as a series of ecclesiastical offices drawn up to prepare the people for the feast of Christmas. Both the penance and the liturgy of Advent are most interesting in their history and it will, I think, help us to appreciate this season if we briefly recall it.

(1) The first sign we have of Advent penance is a law of St. Perpetuus, Bishop of Tours in 480 A. D., mentioned by his successor St. Gregory, which decreed a fast of three days each week from St.

Martin's day, November 11, till Christmas. In 567, monks were ordered to fast from the beginning of December, and later on this fast was commenced on November 11: these forty days were called St. Martin's lent, and were observed by the laity also. This strict discipline was very heroic, and the number of heroes in those days, as now, being few, relaxation was inevitable. Therefore, we find in the ninth century, from a letter to Pope St. Nicholas II, that this lent of St. Martin's has been reduced to four weeks; by the twelfth century fasting is changed to abstinence and (alas! poor human nature) in the fourteenth century Pope Urban V has to insist upon the *clerics,* at least of his court, keeping abstinence to prevent the total loss of Advent penance.

In the sixteenth century, St. Charles Borromeo and Pope Benedict XIV zealously tried to revive the fervor of earlier days; and at Milan St. Charles urged his people to frequent the Sacraments, and to fast at least on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

(2) Now let us see what is the history of the liturgy of Advent. According to the latest authorities it seems certain that Advent, as a liturgical part of the year, existed in the first half of the fifth century and even at the end of the fourth, while it would seem that St. Gregory first drew up the office for the season. At first there were five Sundays, which were reduced to four, the present number, in the ninth or tenth century. Thus the present form of Advent is more than one thousand years old! Venerable, indeed, are the discipline and liturgy of Advent! In their age they retain the strength and activity of youth and are now as necessary and as powerful for good as in earlier and more generous days.

III. (1) If the penitential discipline of Advent has relaxed owing both to the weakness and tepidity of modern times, the Church still, as in the past, emphasizes the penitential character of this season in her discipline and in the ceremonies and prayer of her liturgy.

(*a*) It is a time of frequent fasting and abstinence. The faithful are exhorted to give frequent alms, and it is considered unsuitable to this season to frequent entertainments or to participate in the amusements of other times. Nor will the Church allow the solemnization of marriage, for the children of God should be full of the thought of the eternal nuptial feast and should be preparing by penance for the coming of the Spouse of their souls.

(*b*, 1) Consider, too, the ceremonial of the Mass, her great liturgical act. The very color of the vestments for the season is the penitential

purple and, indeed, before the close of the thirteenth century black vestments were used. At High Mass the Deacon does not wear the dalmatic, nor the Subdeacon the tunic, but folded chasubles are worn instead. On the third Sunday of Advent, which is called *Gaudete* Sunday from the first words of the Introit, these signs of sorrow are modified. Rose-colored vestments are permitted, flowers may adorn the altar, and the Deacon and Subdeacon may wear respectively the dalmatic and tunic. But this note of cheerfulness, caused by the near approach of Christ who is bringing great rewards for generous souls, is merely to encourage us to undergo cheerfully the austerity of the season, and is, therefore, though joyful in itself, a witness to the penitential character of the weeks which it relieves. At the end of the Mass also the Deacon does not dismiss the people with the words "Ite missa est," but he says "Benedicamus Domino," as if to exhort the people to remain in continuous prayer.

(*b*, 2) Let us now look into the Prayer of the Liturgy and see what lessons we may learn from it. On the third Sunday of this season our attention is strongly drawn to the need of penance. We read in St. John's Gospel that "there was a man sent from God whose name was John." He was the Precursor. He came with a divine mission to prepare the way of the Lord, for he was "sent from God." How, my brethren, did *he* prepare for his Lord? We read that "he had his garments of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey." He was also a man of prayer. He lived in the desert; he did not obtrude himself upon the world, but his voice "cried in the wilderness 'make straight the way of the Lord.'" He drew men by the austerity and prayer of his life to come into the desert to listen to his doctrine of penance and prayer as the preparation for the Messias. Of all the prophets he was the last and the greatest, for did not He who was greater than the prophets say of him that "amongst the sons of men there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist?" He came then with great authority to give testimony of Christ. He preached but one doctrine, and he preached it fearlessly. He had not one doctrine for the mighty and another for the poor. He stood boldly before the impure Herod and preached penance and self-restraint as he had preached them at the fords of the Jordan. Pride and passion were the obstacles which the coming Messias would meet. The road had to be prepared, the hills of pride to be leveled, and the valleys of slothful self-indulgence filled up. This was his mission and he flinched not

in word, work or deed. Oh! for another saint with the spirit of Elias and the Baptist to go down into the wicked cities of this land and cry aloud the message of penance and of self-restraint as the only preparation for Christ's coming! If Christ is to rule over our modern world it must first accept the teaching of penance: it must cherish the teaching of the past, for it is the teaching for all time. The *methods* of penance may change according to different needs, but the *law* of penance remains forever. For this the Church of God is fighting. For this she clings tenaciously to her times of penitential discipline and to those rites which can speak to the *senses* of men. Let me urge you then, my brethren, to be obedient to the penitential laws of the Church, for they will help you to prepare the way of the Lord.

(2) But, my brother, the character of Advent is not only one of penance: it bids us also prepare for Christ, and we must try to appreciate liturgy, for in it are contained the true sentiments which those should possess who are looking for Christ's coming. The Church is a society for the true worship of God, and therefore she has a public and official system of worship. This is the liturgy: it has grown gradually around the great facts of redemption, but always and everywhere the Church has watched and intervened to condemn what was false, to correct what was inaccurate, to reject what was inordinate, so that we may say she has watched over her liturgy as she has watched over her faith, knowing how intimately these are connected. We may feel great security, therefore, that in acquiring the sentiments of the liturgy, we have the sentiments which best accord with the mystery of redemption which they surround and express. What sentiments, then, do we find in the Advent liturgy as a preparation for the coming of Christ?

The liturgy, my dear brethren, is full of reference to the threefold coming of Christ of which I have already spoken. St. Bernard describes these in the following words: "In the first coming, He comes in flesh and in weakness; in the second, He comes in spirit and in power; in the third, He comes in glory and in majesty." This threefold coming is the mystery with which the liturgy of Advent is concerned. Now the Church has an official prayer-book, called the Breviary, which in Catholic days was in the hands of the laity and was not confined to the clergy as is the case almost universally at the present time. The office of Matins, the Church's first expression of praise in the early morning, opens with an invi-

tatory which an old writer describes as a "calling or a 'stirring' whereby each of you stirreth and exhorteth others to the praising of God." The invitatory of the first Sunday of Advent strikes the keynote of the whole season in these words: "Regem venturum Dominum, venite adoremus": "come, let us adore the King, our Lord, who is to come." On the third Sunday the invitation becomes still more pressing: "Prope est jam Dominus, venite adoremus"; "the Lord is now nigh, come let us adore"; until finally "come let us adore Him whose glory will be seen on the morrow," rings out joyously on Christmas eve.

During the Matins office lessons are read from the prophet Isaias, who foretold so clearly the coming of the Messias and His reception by His people. We hear such wonderful prophecies as the following: "The Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel." And again: "There shall come forth a Branch out of the root of Jesse and a flower shall rise up out of his root." And then God speaks through the prophet declaring the indifference of the people: "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib, but Israel hath not known Me"; and He pronounces a "Wo! upon the sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, ungracious children."

In the liturgy of the Mass the same ideas are presented. The Introit of the second Sunday gives us the good tidings: "People of Sion, behold the Lord will come to save the Gentiles." And on the third Sunday we hear: "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice, for the Lord is nigh." And St. Paul exhorts us to "rise from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we believed." "Therefore," he says: "put off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, and put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

We are exhorted to pray for the coming of the Redeemer in the vivid words of the Old Testament: "Drop down dew, ye heavens from above, and let the clouds rain the Just One. Let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour."

Thus by hymn and canticle, by words of prophets and apostles are we made to feel that the coming of Christ is a real event for us. The liturgy in a most expressive way shows this to us and we confidently trust in the guidance of this official voice of the Church. As we have seen, it tells us of the approaching coming of Christ for which we must prepare by penance and prayer; it plays the rôle

of the Prophets of God; it is the voice of the great St. Paul exhorting the faithful, calling them from sleep to wakefulness; it is the cry of the austere Baptist, the last of the long line of prophets, who, by word and example, calls upon men "to prepare the way of the Lord"; it is a cry from this desert world which craves for Him as the thirsty land for the dew of heaven.

We have now seen, my dear brethren, that the Church, by her discipline, ceremonial and liturgy, preaches to men the two great lessons they need most; first, that penance is necessary before we can share in the merits of Redemption; and, secondly, that there is a real sense in which we can receive Jesus Christ into our souls.

IV. Let us now, my brethren, apply what we have been considering to our own needs. Is not the history of every human life a reflection of the early history of the world before the time of Christ? For a man by original sin is in the darkness until by baptism he is made the friend of God.

He has a heavenly inheritance and the angels are about him in his childhood. Then the serpent creeps into the garden, evil suggestions come to life at his breath, and the will rises against the law of God. The curse falls and there is ruin and disorder and the loss of the heavenly inheritance. Redemption comes now from whence it was promised in the beginning. The restoration of grace to a soul is a *real* coming of the Redeemer, for there can be no cleansing but by the washing of the Precious Blood. Let us not think, my dear brethren, that because Jesus Christ is so quick to forgive and so glad to return to the soul that therefore His rule is secure. We must not think that sin, because it has been forgiven, is done with. Though forgiven, there are in the soul all the after-effects of a rebellion. There remain smouldering opposition to God and a certain paralysis of spiritual activity. A fair land is wrecked by an earthquake or by a volcanic eruption. Not only do all beautiful trees and flowers lie dead, but the very bosom of the earth has been plowed up by titanic force, so that the very contour of the country is changed. The stricken land will once more awake to life and clothe itself with garments of fair foliage; but it will never be quite what it was before. The sense of security has gone and no surface beauty can make us forget the mighty and treacherous forces which slumber beneath.

So it is with a soul that has sinned. Jesus Christ has returned to His own Kingdom, and the ruined soul has been clothed with

the beautiful garment of grace. But the fires of passion still burn beneath and are ever threatening to ruin once more the beauty of God's work. The duty of a man is to gradually extinguish these fires of evil habits and passions until the beauty of virtue reigns secure. This purification of the heart, as it is called by spiritual writers, is the work of a lifetime. It is brought about by an ever-increasing participation in, and co-operation with, the graces of the Redeemer. It is the extension of His Kingdom for which we pray daily when we say "Thy kingdom come." It is the coming of Christ which is known as the second coming. It is one of the mysteries recalled by the feast of Christmas, the result prepared for by the Advent observance. It is finally the lifelong preparation of the soul for the third coming of Christ in majesty to judge the world "with equity" and His people "with truth."

V. Many and bitter are the opponents of Christ's rule. The battle is waged in every country and in every soul. Satan seems to be victorious at every point and the cause of Christ to be lost, and he says once more in his proud heart: "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will ascend above the height of the clouds; I will be like the Most High" (Isaias xiv). This is indeed Satan's day; but the "day of the Lord" is coming, and "He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of hearts" (I Cor. iv). The Son of Man will come clothed with majesty and power, borne up on the wings of the Cherubim. All eyes shall see Him, all knees shall bend either in adoration or in terror. They shall see the "outcast of the people," the King of Creation; the thorn-crowned Head resplendent with Divine Majesty, and the pierced Hands grasping the scepter of Omnipotence. A great cry will rise at that hour from the deluded crowds who have rejected the rule of Christ for that of Satan: "How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning! How art thou fallen that didst wound the nations" (Isaias xiv)! Happy shall we be if during the short years of our trial we have labored for the second coming of Christ and thus are able to welcome Him at the Judgment as our King and Master.

Each year, if we follow the guidance of the Church, the season of Advent will recall these thoughts to our minds and fill our hearts with sentiments of penance and of longing expectation for the coming of Christ. Let us pray that "His Kingdom may come" both into our own souls and into this country. May the Sun of Justice

rise high in the heavens and drive forth before Him the shadows of pride and worldliness, of luxury and selfishness! May the heavens drop down dew upon this parched land, and may the earth bud forth the Saviour!

V. THE INTERIOR OF A CHURCH

BY THE REV. J. REILLY

"Now, therefore, you are no more strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow-citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God:
"Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone:
"In whom all the building, being framed together, groweth up into an holy temple in the Lord,
"In whom you also are built together into an habitation of God in the Spirit."—Eph. ii, 19-22.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—The symbolism of church edifices suggested by St. Paul. It is in accord with Catholic tradition. The method of the Incarnation; the method of the Sacramental system.

I. A church is a gospel written in stone. St. Nilus quoted to show the antiquity of the symbolism of church architecture.

II. The threefold division of a church: the porch, the nave, the sanctuary.

III. The east window; other windows; their symbolism; their "dim religious light"; schools of art and piety. The Way of the Cross. The consecration crosses.

IV. Symbols of the Trinity; the Crucifixion.

Conclusion.—The church edifice represents the invisible Church of Christ, of which the auditors form a part. Be faithful to it.

These words of St. Paul, my dear brethren, indicate that from the earliest days of Christianity a basis of resemblance was recognized between the great spiritual edifice, which is the Church of Jesus Christ, and the material temple in which its sacred rites are performed in worship of the Most High. And the history of Catholic architecture shows that succeeding generations have not been slow in elaborating the hint contained in these words of the apostle of the Gentiles. St. Paul illustrated a great spiritual truth by a comparison drawn from a material building; the Catholic Church has gone further by erecting its buildings so that they shall symbolize and inculcate religious truths.

In so doing the Church has acted in accordance with one of the deepest and surest of her divine instincts. One of the most distinctive notes of the Catholic Church is the wisdom with which she uses the material things of this world for spiritual ends. She learned the lesson from the Divine Founder Himself. It is the method of the Incarnation. "God, invisible among his own, became visible amongst us." He took upon Himself a human body

in order to accommodate Himself to our weak minds. He offered Himself to eye, and ear, and imagination, so that we might learn to know and love Him. Men had found it hard to keep their minds or their affections steady while paying worship to God as a First Cause or a Pure Spirit; now they could turn their adoring gaze on the benign face of Jesus Christ, God incarnate. His voice, in conscience or in His revelation to patriarch or prophet, seemed faint and distant; now He let it be heard clear and distinct through human lips which were His own. And in His time on earth, when He was showering His invisible graces on those who sought them, He was wont to use some external word or sign to mark the event.

The same method is manifest in the whole sacramental system which He instituted as the means of graces for the members of His Church. He could and does unite Himself with His elect in a purely spiritual manner; but He chose to institute the great Sacrament, in which He comes to us, under visible and tangible species of bread and wine. He could and does remit sins without words spoken or external actions performed; but He ordained a system of forgiveness through sacred rites with cleansing waters, and healing oils, and priestly words of absolution. By the dispensation of God material things have been made the instruments and signs of invisible grace. He knows our nature, for He made us. So He accommodates His greatness to our littleness, and deals with us in accordance with our weak faculties.

The Church, following the example of her Divine Founder, has made the visible things of the world speak of the power and love of the invisible God who made them. The sacred text of Scriptures has been often interpreted by the mystical writer in a spiritual sense, as it is called. That is to say, they draw from common facts and sayings some allegory or interpretation which bears upon the inner life of the soul and its relations with God. And so we might say that the Church has found a spiritual sense in the great primary book of God's revelation of Himself, the universe which He has made. Light and fire, water and air, tone and line and color, bread and wine and salt and wax, green palm and brilliant flowers she has made to speak in His name.

And nowhere does the Spouse of Christ make a more elaborate effort to use the visible things of the earth to spell the glories of God than in the edifices which she raises for His worship. In the very construction of a church everything is planned to lead the

soul to devotion and to suggest the idea of the sacred mysteries of our holy faith. A church is a gospel written in stone—a message of religion not in written or spoken words, but in colored glass and painted walls and chiseled stone. And this symbolic meaning which we can find in the various parts of a church is not merely accidental, nor something read into the facts by pious ingenuity. The symbolism of church edifices has been recognized from early ages, and has been elaborated with deliberation by artists and mystics. Even in the fifth century we find St. Nilus writing to one who asked his opinion on this matter: "You have asked me," he says, "to give you the reasons for some of the symbols of our churches. I answer that the holy-water fonts represent purification of soul; the pillars indicate the doctrines of the Church; the apse, which receives light from the Orient, marks the honor rendered to the holy, consubstantial and adorable Trinity; the stones represent the union of souls, firmly set and lifting themselves ever towards heaven; the stalls, and steps, and seats indicate the diversity of souls in which reside the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and recall those which surrounded the Apostles when in the first days of the Church the tongues of fire rested on their brows; the bishop's throne in the middle of the chancel recalls the throne of the Supreme Pontiff, our Lord Jesus Christ."

But let us see for ourselves the religious uses or meanings to which the Spouse of Christ has dedicated the different portions of her sacred edifices. On entering the door of a church, we find first of all a porch or vestibule separated from the body of the edifice by some sort of wall. In early days, those who were not initiated in the Christian mysteries by the Sacrament of Baptism, and sinners under the canonical penance, were not allowed to go beyond this vestibule while divine service was going on. It corresponds to the porch in the Jewish temple, into which Gentiles might be admitted. Even in our own days this porch is considered liturgically as being outside the church proper. But entering in, for we are of the household of the faith, we find ourselves in the main body of the church, called the nave, from the Latin word *navis*, which means *a ship*. The name may have been applied on account of its elongated shape, or it may have had from the beginning a symbolic use, since, according to the Fathers, the church is a bark which traverses the stormy seas of this world with Christ as its captain, St. Peter as its pilot, and the faithful as happy passengers bound for the port of salvation.

At the forward end, which is always the east end in our ancient cathedrals, is a portion railed off, corresponding to the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Jerusalem. But of this sanctuary and what it contains we shall speak hereafter; for it merits special treatment.

One of the first things that impresses us as we enter into the interior of one of our splendid churches is the glorious eastern window behind the high altar, through which the rising sun throws its splendors over the exalted beauties of the house of God. It is a figure of Christ, who is called the Orient, the sun of justice, the splendor of light eternal. And letting our gaze wander about the walls we see windows after windows through which the light comes softened and beautified by the radiance which it gathers from the glowing figures of prophet and evangelist, doctor and martyr, confessor and virgin, or the gleaming figure of the Christ. It is through Him and through them that God enlightens His Church. As the poet says:

> "Through such souls alone
> God, stooping, shows sufficient of His light,
> For us in the dark to rise by."

But colored windows have not merely a symbolic purpose. They light the church, but in such a way as to produce that "dim religious light," that mystic gloom, half light, half darkness, which excludes the garishness of day and leaves our minds free to enter into contemplation of things eternal. A Catholic church is a house of prayer. If we examine the windows, directly we find a representation of some holy person of old or a score from the life of our Lord to inspire us to devotion; and even when they are not the object of our attention, they are producing those subdued tones which calm our restless spirit and soothe our souls to serene and hopeful prayer, like a rich organ gently played.

More than that, these windows, with the statues and pictures about the church, have been for ages a school of art and religion in which the most unlettered could study with profit. The Church is the greatest teacher in all the ages. Methods of instruction, which art to-day being "discovered," have been in use with her from time immemorial. She has used the object lesson, and the method of teaching by plays and games, by song and story, by pilgrimage and pageantry. But, second only after preaching, her favorite method in past ages seems to have been to instruct men in the truths of

religion by means of painting and sculpture. Reading takes to-day a place more prominent perhaps than even preaching; but in an age when few could read, the Church employed the most efficacious means of religious instruction. In doing so she rendered a service not only to the illiterate members of the flock, but to every man who is capable of artistic feeling. She has patronized art with a lavish hand, and she has offered in her churches, for the poor as well as the wealthy, the richest art treasures in the world. The churches have been the art galleries of the common people.

But it is primarily as aids to piety that these sacred representation have been placed in our churches. And amongst such aids to piety the one most commonly found is the Way of the Cross. The fourteen statues depict the sad journey of the Redeemer of the world from Pilate's hall to the hill of Calvary. They are ever before the eyes of the faithful to arouse the emotions of pity and sorrow as they contemplate the sufferings which Christ endured for their sins.

These are found in almost every church, but it is only in consecrated edifices that we see on the walls twelve crosses with brackets in which candles are kept burning on each anniversary of the day of consecration. These represent the twelve Apostles of the Lord, the foundation stones of the Church, and the candles typify the faith which they handed down to us. In some churches the figure of an Apostle is painted on the wall above each cross with the section of the Apostles' Creed which is attributed to him.

Other and deeper truths are often found symbolized throughout the whole edifice. Over and over again we find the mystical number three, which indicates the Most Blessed Trinity, in the formation of the windows, in the number of doors, and especially in the favorite triple division of the nave. And, as we might expect in edifices raised for the worship of Christ, everything points to Him. The pictures speak of Him and His chosen friends. The line of the columns lead the willing eye towards Him on the altar. Nay, in Gothic churches, even the shape of the building is in the form of a cross, with the apse for head-piece, the transcripts for arms, the nave for the longer section. This idea was so strong with the pious cathedral builders of old that in some churches the apse inclines somewhat out of the straight line to represent the dropping of the Sacred Head of Christ as He died on the Cross.

There remains finally, my dear brethren, that other comparison

which is indicated by St. Paul in the text which I have chosen, the comparison of a church edifice with the invisible Church of Christ, that mighty edifice which is world-wide in its amplitude and heaven-high in the reach of its spires, founded on the apostles and prophets, with Christ for its corner-stone. You yourselves are the stones, precious jewels, each one of you, in the sight of God, which make up the walls of this mighty Church. You are the stones, trimmed and squared by penance and the trials of life, cemented by faith and charity, and each doing its share in forming and supporting the great fabric of the Church of Christ.

Be proud, therefore, of that great Church to which you belong, in which you are "fellow-citizens with the saints and the domestics of God." Show your loyalty to that Holy Mother Church by your devotion to this church in which we now worship. Let your devotion be made manifest by your desire for the full equipment and adorning of this church, in accordance with the best traditions of Catholic art and liturgy. Be devoted, too, to its services and faithful to its practises, knowing that this building is for you the vestibule which leads you to that great Church triumphant in the heavenly city, where the faithful offer their joyous worship forever to the great High Priest, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

VI. THE SANCTUARY AND THE ALTAR

BY THE REV. J. REILLY

"O Lord, I have loved the beauty of thy house, and the place where thy glory dwelleth."—Ps. xxv, 8.

SYNOPSIS.—I. The Sanctuary—somewhat as in the Temple. Its contents: bench, throne, credence-table, altars.
II. Churches beautified on account of altar and what it means. The universality of sacrifice. Mass a fulfilling of ancient sacrifices.
III. Altar like a tomb. Mass in the Catacombs.
IV. Like a table. The Last Supper.
V. A Height. The Hill of Calvary. The Cross above the altar.
VI. The Tabernacle.
Conclusion.—Christ in the tabernacle is the true pastor of the parish. His varied activities. Pray that we may receive His ministrations in the hour of need.

In the temple built to the glory of God by His chosen people, a section was set apart for the ministering clergy, which was called the sanctum, or holy place. And so, in all Catholic churches, the forward portion is railed off for the use of the clergy and ministers of the sacred rites, and is called the sanctuary. It is elevated above the floor of the nave to aid vision and also to indicate that those admitted to it should aim at a degree of perfection higher than that required of others. Besides the altars it contains a bench for the ministers to occupy when the choir is singing its part in the celebration of the sacred mysteries; and in cathedral churches a throne for the bishop, on which he can preside over his flock. It is from this *sedes,* or seat, that we derive the name of *see,* which we apply to our dioceses. There is found invariably a table, called a credence table, placed near the altar on the epistle side, to hold the cruets with wine and water, and, at High Mass, the chalice with the bread for consecration, until it is brought to the altar for the offertory. In this use it recalls the table on which rested in the Tabernacle of Moses the Loaves of Proposition.

But the sanctuary is only a setting for the altar. It is in the altar that all the lines and plans converge. It is in view of what happens there and of Him who resides there that our churches are built. If God were not there in His ever-renewed immolation, if

it were not for the fact that He dwells on our altars to the end of time to be near his faithful followers, how bare and empty our churches would be. The wealth and skill of ages have been expended on our temples because they are the dwelling-places of the One whom all the earth should delight to honor. If it were not for the altar and what it means, the assembly-places of the Christian Church would be as unadorned as the meeting-houses of early Protestantism. Nay more. Even in churches which Catholic piety has built and adorned, but which have been taken by Protestants, like the old cathedrals of England, there is a feeling that it is beauty out of place and for no end when one looks in vain for the altar of sacrifice and the tabernacle. They seem empty and cold, vast tombs of a dead faith, not temples of a living one. But we have the Lord Himself on our altars. To Him we offer gold and jewels, chiseled stone and beautiful colors. It is because it is His altar that we cover it with fine linen and delicate embroideries.

The altar has been always, in the history of mankind, the central point of religious worship. There were altars before there were churches. It is in the altar that the Church takes up and carries on, in a perfect form, whatever was of good in the religious aspirations of humanity in the past. Holy Writ tells us that in the earliest days of the world Abel built an altar and thereon made sacrifice to God. Noe also offered sacrifice in thanksgiving to God after coming out from the ark. In the career of Abraham, one of the most striking incidents was that in which the father of the chosen people united with Melchisedech in offering the oblation of bread and wine, a symbol of that great sacrifice of love which was to be offered daily in the New Dispensation for all the races of men. In spite of the difficulties that beset the Hebrew host in their wanderings through the desert lands, Moses was most sedulous in erecting and beautifying the tabernacle and the altars of incense and of sacrifice. And in the temple built by Solomon we see how all the riches and all the skill at his disposal were bent to the decoration of this holy place.

In our altars, therefore, we have the continuation and perfection of the worship of the past, whether that, paid in groping fashion by the priests of the pagan world, or that, offered according to divine direction by His chosen Levites in the Old Covenant. But our altars also reproduce memories that are nearer to us as Christians. Looking at an altar, it reminds us by its shape of an oldtime tomb. And

there is a reason for this, for time was in the Church when the Holy Sacrifice was literally offered upon a tomb, and to this day the Mass is always said over a small stone—the real altar—which contains the relics of the sainted dead. It is a beautiful custom which connects the Church of to-day with the Church of the Catacombs. In those days of trial and martyrdom, when Catholic piety was not able to raise churches towering to the skies, it took refuge underground among the graves of the dead. The dead were buried in spaces let into the clay wall of the vault, and above the bones of the martyrs a space was hollowed out and the sacred mysteries offered by their brethren in the faith. And to this day something of this beautiful custom remains. True, we Catholics of this generation do not kneel at Mass among the graves of our sainted kindred, but the altars are there, and the relics of the saints who are our brethren in the faith are there, and the same holy sacrifice is still offered, all making us one in faith and feeling with the early Christians, to whose devotion we owe the faith they handed down to us.

The altar is also a table, a table at which is partaken the most sacred banquet. It is a table because it perpetuates that table in the room at Jerusalem at which our Lord and His Apostles shared for the first time the eucharistic meal. It is a table which supplies food, not for the body, but for the soul. Countless generations have fed at that sacred table and have come away refreshed for the struggle with evil. There is "the bread of the strong," which infuses new courage and fortitude into drooping souls and strengthens them to take up more boldly the fight against their own passions and the evils of the world. There is "the wine that begets virgins," the source of chastity and of whatsoever things are pure and holy and just. For it is at this sacred table that our Lord Himself feeds His faithful souls with His own Body and Blood, just as He did His Apostles in Jerusalem nineteen hundred years ago. No wonder that this table has been the center of influence for good in this world; no wonder that chaste thoughts and holy impulses and noble ideals and lives devoted to sacrifice for others have been its fruits. The only wonder is that men, who know what this table is and what the nature of its divine Repast, do not flock to it daily for the strength and uplift they need upon the way of life.

The altar is raised up above the level of the church as on a hill.

The very word "altar," in its derivation, has reference to a high place, and sacrifice has generally been offered on a hill. But to us it does not signify any casual hill; there is one hill in this world which is to every Christian the most sacred spot on earth, the Hill of Calvary, and it is of this hill we think when we reflect upon our altars. For every altar is a Calvary on which is repeated over and over again in an unbloody manner the great sacrifice which Christ offered on Calvary's height for the redemption of the world. Each morning He is immolated anew upon the altar, Himself a Priest, and Himself the Victim. All sacrifices antecedent to His were only a foreshadowing of the sacrifice upon the Cross; the sacrifices since then on Christian altars have been its continuation. Above the tabernacle, in the center of the altar, rises the Crucifix itself, to signify the nature of the great action that is there performed. The Cross is used in other places and rites—it enters with every portion of our liturgy. But it finds no more fitting place than it does here. It gleams above the tabernacle as the standard of the great King, the instrument and the symbol of His victory. It is the index of the sacrifice, and unless it be there holy Church does not permit the sacrifice to be offered.

But Christ is not content with coming down amongst us to help and console us for a time. He wishes to remain always with us, and so He remains on our altars, concealing His glory in a narrow room. This small house is the "place where His glory dwelleth"; it is the resting-place of the Lamb of God; it is the ark of the new covenant which He has made with men in the shedding of His Blood; it is the true Holy of Holies, the perfection of that tabernacle which Moses made by the command of God.

Here He dwells throughout the day and night, most of the time as retired and unnoticed as He was during the thirty years at Nazareth. And, indeed, especially when the sanctuary contains, in addition to the main altar, side-altars to our blessed Lady and to St. Joseph, it may well be compared to the Holy House at Nazareth. Here he remains, too often neglected, but never neglecting others. Here on this altar, my dear brethren, our dear Lord abides as the true Pastor of this parish. From this tabernacle He looks round about the parish by day and by night and sees and notes every detail of our lives. And sometimes He is happy at what He sees, and often, I fear, He is sad. He notes the angry word, the filthy expression, the dishonest deed, the cowardly lie, the neglect of His

presence and His love, and His Sacred Heart is saddened thereby. But He notes also the generous deed, the kindly, helpful word, the lad that touches his cap as he passes the church, and all these things give Him pleasure. There, too, He is always sending forth the rays of His grace to touch the hearts of sinners or bring consolation to those in pain of body or mind. He is drawing men gently, but firmly, hither and bringing them to their knees at His feet, their eyes filled with tears of true contrition, and He is sending them forth again with renewed strength and vigor. And He is happy when His flock show their appreciation of His love and care, when they fill His church when the sacrifice of His Body and Blood is made, or crowd towards His altar to receive Him in holy Communion. And how willing He goes forth, in the hands of His priest, to the poorest and humblest abode in order to bring the comforting assurance of His grace and salvation to a dying member of His beloved little flock.

This is what the tabernacle means to us Catholics—the home of our best and truest friend. Be faithful to Him and to His altar during the years of your pilgrimage here below. Ask Him now that, in time of temptation or other need, He may send out His help from this place; ask that when the day comes when no human help can be of further avail in this life, He may come forth from this tabernacle to be your Viaticum on the road you must travel; and that the holy Sacrifice may be offered on the altar, so that it may win for your soul speedy admission to the beauty of His house above, and the place where His glory dwelleth.

VII. THE SPLENDOR AND THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOUSE OF GOD

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of thy house, and the place where thy glory dwelleth."—Psalm xxv, 8.

SYNOPSIS.—I. The desire of David to build a house of God. This desire executed by Solomon—continually realized by the Catholic Church. Religious ideals and emotions created in mind and heart by our churches.

II. The place of the church or cathedral in Catholic countries. The feelings begotten by one's presence in and study of a house of God; of the vast cathedrals. Admiration for the Dark Ages, which have left their impress on the ages through their beautiful cathedrals.

III. Contrast between Catholic and Protestant churches materially, architecturally, archeologically, spiritually. The difference of effect due to the Real Presence in the Catholic Church.

I. This sentiment was one of the uppermost in the mind of that great king of Israel who is the model to all times of the virtue of religion. When, after much danger and many vicissitudes, David at last attained to the throne, and had overcome the last of his enemies, his first thought, as we read, was to build a house for God. "And it came to pass when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest on every side from all his enemies, he said to Nathan the prophet: Dost thou see that I dwell in a house of cedar, and the Ark of God is lodged within skins" (II Kings vii, 1, 2).

God did not grant him the honor he desired, as he had been a man of blood, but reserved it for his son Solomon to build the Temple of Jerusalem. This was his first care when he succeeded his father; and in the 131st Psalm he recalls and renews the vow of David: "If I shall enter into the tabernacle of my house; if I shall go up into the bed wherein I lie; if I shall give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eyelids, or rest to my temples; until I find out a place for the Lord, a tabernacle for the God of Jacob" (Psalm cxxxi, 3, 5).

Accordingly, he raised a temple to God, which was the wonder of all the earth. It was built of hewn stone, precious woods, and cedars of Lebanon, and the decorations and the ornaments were of gold, and the workmanship was of more value even than the rich materials. All that generosity could give or art devise was lavished on the Temple, because it was to be the house of God. All Israel shared in the piety of their ruler. The Temple was the object of

their delight and of their patriotism: the religious building was the symbol of their nationality. They, too, loved exceedingly the house of God and the dwelling-place of His glory.

The Catholic Church, inheriting the presence of God, has inherited the sentiments of the Israelites of love for the house of God. The place where God's glory dwells has been the object of her love and delight, it has elicited the sense of beauty and talent for art, and has become the embodiment of ideas too great for words. The ideas of Faith, the aspirations to the supernatural, divine enthusiasm of love, the apprehension of God's greatness, eternity, immutability, sovereign ownership of all things, His peace, His beauty, these have all been expressed in terms of stone and iron, marble and gold, carving and coloring, loftiness and solidity. A great building is a language. It is a vehicle that conveys thought from one mind to another. The architect commits, not merely designs and combinations of lines and curves, but the imprint of his own character and habits of thought to the enduring forms of stone; and 500 years later, or 5000 years, perhaps, those ideas are poured upon us, ideas without words and not easily translated into words, but true, vivid, and overwhelming by their grandeur and beauty, even as when they seethed in the brain of the author. Musical strains convey ideas more vividly at times than words; they stir the mind with martial ardor or voluptuous desires, raise it towards heaven, or degrade it to frivolity and sin. The painter, too, in the lines and colors of a mere landscape, can move us to exultation or despondency, can bring us thoughts of solitude, death, turmoil, or of peace and life. Architecture speaks with the same precision, and it seems to be the special vehicle of thoughts supernatural and divine.

The Temple of Solomon was certainly living speech and eloquent to the Jews who gazed upon it. That speech, too, was inspired, and conveyed ideas from God to the beholder. God specially prepared those who were to build the Tabernacle in the desert under the guidance of Moses. As we read in Exodus: "The Lord spoke to Moses saying: Behold I have called by name Beseleel . . . of the tribe of Juda. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God with wisdom and understanding, and knowledge in all manner of work. To devise whatsoever may be artificially made" (Exod. xxxi, 1-2).

The character of church architecture in the ages of Faith was the creation of the religious ideas which molded men's characters under the influence of the Catholic Church: such architecture certainly

raises religious ideas in our minds and emotions in our hearts. May we not imagine the Spirit of God, as He has guided preachers and spiritual writers, so guiding the builders of the glorious cathedrals of Western Europe, that they might imprint on their work, and so convey to future generations some similitude of the Divine perfections. The exquisite beauty of these churches, their harmony of proportions, their simplicity and truthfulness, the perfect taste of their enrichment, their sustained grandeur, their extraordinary variety of equally extraordinary general uniformity, these things would seem to indicate some great, uniform, and superhuman principle behind these numerous builders of so many different centuries and lands and characters.

These buildings convey to us the thoughts of those who reared them. We learn how vivid was their faith in God's presence, as if we heard them say: "This is no other but the house of God, and the gate of Heaven" (Gen. xxviii, 17); we learn how confident was their assurance of the eternal truth of their religion and how sincere their attachment to it. They, indeed, were inheritors of the spirit of him who said, "I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth" (Psal. xxv, 3).

II. When the traveler in a Catholic country, or in a country once Catholic, approaches a city, the first thing he sees is the tall graceful spire, or the double towers of the cathedral rising through the haze that hangs over the earth, and piercing the blue sky. Clearer it grows and clearer till at last he reaches the city, and there, in the midst of the massed houses pressing around it, he sees it in all its detail, gray, massive yet elegant, venerable with years, inexpressibly beautiful, the center of the picture, and the great center of interest. Like to that was the place that religion held then, and should hold now, in human life. The great church dominates the whole city and gives it a special character. It links the present with the past. Generation has followed generation to the tomb. Again and again has the city been renewed piece by piece; all the old landmarks have been changed; new manners and customs have arisen; one thing remains, silent and unmoved, the golden chain that binds the centuries together, the cathedral or the church. Alone it survives as the witness of great events of history. The furious waves of war have dashed over it and then subsided; it has passed through long periods of uneventful but happy peace, and through the horrors of the siege. Triumphs and tragedies, great national rejoicings and perils have

been announced from the bells in its towers. The very sight of it gives reality to history, and recalls vividly every detail of the long-buried past. The mere historic interest of the material pile renders old Catholic churches the most sacred monuments of a country.

Bound up with the loveliness of age and the charm of old associations, is the intrinsic beauty of the edifice itself. Medieval cathedrals stand apart and form a special department among beautiful objects, and, like mountain heights and summer landscapes and the broad expanse of the ocean, they are sought out by those who need something to brace and elevate their minds above the sordid cares that usually occupy them. And such is the effect of that more than human beauty. No one can carefully examine such an object without feeling a rush of new life and higher aspirations through his being. When you stand before the west front of an old cathedral and look up at the great towers, rising perhaps three or four hundred feet above your head; when you see the grand harmony of design, the elaborate carving, the ingenious tracery, the niches with images of saints and angels, the history of the Old and New Testaments portrayed in carved stone, and all showing the gracefulness and pliancy of the finest lace, you are not only entranced with delight but overwhelmed with wonder. You enter the great doors and find another wonderful spectacle before you. There are cathedrals where every square yard of surface is a treasure of art. The floor, perhaps, is etched with outlines of the chief events of sacred history, or covered with opus Alexandrinum, a sort of mosaic in regular patterns made in colored stone, and varying in detail like a kaleidoscope. The walls and pillars are of polished marbles of richest hues, varied with pictures in fresco or mosaics on a golden ground. There are numerous side chapels, each with its altar, its tombs, its confessionals, its stained windows and painted walls: its metal work, its woodwork, statues, and lamps, and crucifixes of precious metals, and of still more precious design and workmanship. Then there are the embroidered vestments, the banners, the shrines, the sacred vessels, the relics of the saints. These are the details which go to make up the general view. The visitor pauses from inspecting the details, and tries to take this all in, motionless and silent; for here, too, "the eye is not filled with seeing, neither is the ear filled with hearing" (Eccles. i, 8). It takes long for it all to sink into the mind. As you stand thus, you have, stretching away before you, the broad nave with its diminishing vista of arches and columns and the aisles beyond. The

eye rises up the length of the delicate shafts to the broad roof of solid stone with its hanging pendants, unsupported to all appearance and seeming to disregard all laws of gravity. Yet the tons of massive stone have hung suspended there for centuries, as light and as graceful as gossamer webs. Again you notice the beams of colored light shining through the gorgeous windows, and the deep recesses of mysterious shade, and the center of all is the high altar with the image of the Crucified One, whose influence has created this wonderful spectacle.

Again there is new cause for astonished admiration when we think of the ages when these churches were built. Dark ages we call them. Men had not then the means and mechanical appliances that we possess, nor the knowledge, nor the wealth. Society was in an unsettled condition, science hardly existed. In our conceit we look upon the men of those days almost as barbarians. Think, too, of the long years, of the centuries even, of labor required to complete such a cathedral; think of the enormous quantity of minute labor lavished on those carvings in every part, of the generations that worked at it, son succeeding father, and succeeded again by his sons. Think of the enormous masses, thousands of tons of stone, that had to be cut in distant quarries, carted to the spot, and changed from a rough mountain of shapeless blocks into that graceful building. Imagine the expense of all these materials, of all that labor, of the support of so many men for so many centuries, and, above all, think of the courage of the men who dared to conceive and to commence such buildings, and the sublime confidence with which they trusted other generations to finish their work. We marvel at a man who is able to subdue other minds and impress his individuality upon them: much more when his mind dominates another generation that has not known him personally: still more when his ideas become the ideas and form the character of a nation during centuries. Such were the founders of religious orders, a few great authors, or the organizers of young nationalities. Like this have been those often unknown architects of great churches. They have imprinted their character and their ideas on their plans and their work as far as it has gone. Succeeding generations have tried to carry these ideas into effect, and at last the nineteenth century, with its pride in itself and its own sufficiency, has felt itself constrained by the sheer force of the beauty in the mind of a long-forgotten architect, to take up his work and carry it to a conclusion. Such has been the case with

the Cologne Cathedral, finished only a few years ago, after six centuries of work, in a nation which no longer follows the religion which commenced, and which still worships God in that cathedral.

III. These wonderful cathedrals, churches, monasteries, scattered over all the Catholic countries of Europe, communicate a special and irresistible charm to the cities or villages where they are found. Artists and travelers in search of novelty and pleasure linger at these old towns. How different they are from the towns of a Protestant country. Who could delight in Liverpool, Nottingham, Bristol, Leeds, as in Rouen, Bayeux, Orvisto, Seville, Spires? It is not only Catholics who can thoroughly feel the charm of these sacred spots where their own worship has been carried on uninterruptedly for 1200 years, but Protestants of all shades throng these churches, feast upon their beauty, and yield themselves to their fascination, while scorning the doctrines and blaspheming the worship they find there. And in Protestant Britain the most restful and beautiful spots are the cathedral close, as at Lincoln and Peterborough, or the ruined abbey, as at Melrose and Tintern; and the picnic parties of the present day witness unconsciously to the same spiritual charm which formerly made them places of pilgrimage.

It is precisely in so far as they are Catholic that they stir the sentiment of poetry. The ruined abbey suggests nothing of Protestantism but its barbarity; it carries the thoughts straight to Catholic times. An old Catholic cathedral perverted to Protestant worship is, indeed, a melancholy spectacle. Cathedrals like those of Rotterdam, or Worms, are closed from Sunday to Sunday. By paying a fee, the unfrequent visitor may succeed in entering them and being hurried through. They cannot be without interest, but it is merely archeological; there are the curves of the arches, and the clustered columns still, but otherwise there is a desert of whitewash: a few deal pews and a pulpit supply all that is required for the worship of the scanty congregations. Their religion cannot rise to the height even of using these magnificent churches. They have no life of their own that they can transfuse into them: for they live but on the crumbs that fall from the table of the Catholic Church. A great church in Catholic hands is a living, breathing thing: in Protestant hands it is a corpse; it has the material likeness to its old self, but all utility, beauty and life are gone. What man, what Protestant even, could linger with delight in the London churches as in those of Paris or Venice? Yet many of them are very good specimens of architecture;

they are redolent of the Protestant spirit, of respectability and comfort. They fail in something—in life and the beauty of life which is so conspicuous in the Catholic church. The one is a house uninhabited, the other is one which has a living Presence. Let them be equal in all respects, and one will be chill, formal, and a little ghastly, the other is warm and homelike. It is not the mere architecture, not the age, or even the associations which constitute the charm of Catholic churches.

Neither does the charm consist in the multiplicity of beautiful works of art. A museum of ecclesiastical art does not produce the same impression with its specimens of all kinds taken from a hundred churches, labelled, numbered, and cased in glass. Sometimes a secularizing government has turned a church itself into an ecclesiastical museum, as at Trèves and elsewhere; but it is by no means the same thing as a church in actual use for the worship of God. In great galleries of paintings you may see altar-pieces from Spanish churches, frescoes from despoiled monasteries, the great religious pictures of the greatest artists. They have been placed there by sacrilegious hands in order, as men think, that these treasures may be within the reach of all and give pleasure to wider circles. But how different the pleasure we take in their beauty when we see, in their own proper place, the frescoes of Giotto in the tower church of Assisi, and the altar-pieces of Cimabue in the churches of Florence. The splendor of old Catholic churches in their architecture and their adornment was not intended for a simple spectacle but for use. Let them be secularized and treated simply as works of art: their charm is gone, they are but the dry bones of religious life.

It is not the pictures, or the marbles, or the jeweled crosses, or even the long vista of the groined roof, or the stained glass set in tracery, that so impresses the stranger to our worship. These are what he has gone to seek, these interest him most, but his deepest impressions are from another source. The works of art are not singular, for he can see them in many museums; the singular thing is the sight of a church in which there is life, reality, vivid feeling, and where others at least seem to feel the presence of God. This creates an atmosphere that he has not known before. He sees a church that is always open, that is always in use. People enter as of right, as into their own houses. They go in, in an easy, unaffected way; not with forced solemnity and weighted with the consciousness of doing an unusual thing, not wearing their Sunday clothes and their Sunday faces; but they enter in their workday clothes, with

their baskets on their arms even, proceed to kneel down in the most matter-of-fact way, and become engrossed at once in prayer. Masses are going on all the morning in the different side-chapels, a crowd kneels around each. Some are entering or leaving the confessional in turn, others approach the altar for holy Communion. Votive candles are lighted before a statue; many, as they pass by, stop to kneel a moment before some particular picture or altar. Everywhere are signs of fervent belief yet no heated enthusiasm, of real feeling but no fanaticism, deep devotion but no affectation or self consciousness, perfect quietness but no deadness.

There are certain Protestant churches which are exceptions to what has been just now said. They are not utterly bare; signs of care are visible; they have been restored to something of their old beauty; they are open constantly; many go there to look about with respectful interest, sometimes a person may go there to pray. There is a beauty in them that impresses every one; but it is as I have already said, it is just so far as they are Catholic. The memories which hang around them are Catholic, and these memories are being revived by the Catholic reaction in the Protestant Church, which is reëstablishing old beliefs and long-neglected ceremonies, and restoring those churches with more fidelity than Protestant worship requires, replacing holy water stoups at doors, and images of the Blessed Virgin over the Communion table. As soon as Truth begins to revive, there at once Beauty begins to bud forth, material at first, but let us hope it may become spiritual and real some day by the infusion of actual life from the Catholic Church.

It is in vain that other religions try to copy the material beauty of the Catholic Church and her external forms, or even the devotions of the Catholic faithful. They may think that by reproducing the material forms of Catholic worship they will infuse life into their religions. But these forms are rather the signs of life than sources of life. The secret of that life which is so impressive in the Catholic churches, the source of it is the Real Presence of the Son of God under the Sacramental Species. The flickering red light that burns before the altar, as soon as it is seen, changes the whole aspect of the church to the Catholic's eye. It bears upon him the solemn conviction that this is really and truly the house of God and the gate of Heaven. Strangers cannot understand the devotion of the average Catholic congregation; here is an adequate cause for it—the Real Presence. Jesus Christ the Son of God is corporally present

there, and being there he draws all unto Himself, all the minds and the hearts of those who know that He is there. The firm and universal belief in this wonderful doctrine is in itself an enormous force, diffusing itself through men's minds, elevating their faculties, exciting all their energies. Under its influence the mind is exalted, the imagination devises means of expressing the mind's ideas, and the will, expanding in generous love, offers the best of human possessions to the service of God. Deep faith and deep feeling are the soil in which all the external and internal devotions of Catholics is rooted. From these proceed the artistic inspiration that has covered Europe with its marvelous architectural harvest of churches, cathedrals, and abbeys. From these proceed the inspiration of the poet and the musician, the splendor of ceremonial, the generosity which heaps up precious offerings, the patience and perseverance which enabled men to carry into effect their vast artistic designs. Hence, too, the pilgrimages, the numerous forms of devotion, the abstraction of mind in long prayers before the tabernacle. But transcending all mere feeling there is the actual divine impulse communicated by Jesus Christ to the multitude of loving believers, from the altars where He is actually present.

Hence, the difference between the Catholic spirit and the sectarian spirit in their buildings and in the bearing of the congregations. One enjoys the Real Presence, the other boasts of the real absence. It is impossible that the same effects should flow from the absence as from the presence of Jesus Christ. Cleanliness, respectability and comfort may, indeed, be found where Christ does not abide personally, but devotion like that of Catholics is never found in these conventicles; they are houses for men, not houses of God, and nothing higher than human characteristics can be expected there. The semblance of anything higher must be unreal and shallow and false. It may result from a forced and transient enthusiasm, or from a mere superficial imitation of Catholic externals; it cannot be real, permanent, deep, and widespread, apart from the real presence of Jesus Christ and a firm belief in it. The effect cannot transcend its cause: water cannot rise above its source. The words of Our Lord are applicable here: "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you the branches; he that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing" (I. John xv, 4, 5).

VIII. CHRISTMAS

BY THE REV. JOHN H. STAPLETON

"Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass which the Lord has showed to us."—Luke ii, 15.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—I. The Mass: (a) The Gloria, song of the angels. (b) The Consecration, Eucharistic re-birth. (c) The Church, Bethlehem or House of Bread. (d) Faithful welcome and reception. (e) Communion, "He came to His own." (f) Real Presence, Emmanuel or God with us.

II. The Three Masses: (a) The Midnight Mass. Emmanuel in the flesh, then and now. (b) Emmanuel in the spirit by grace. The dawn of day and of a new life in the shepherd's souls. The morning Mass and its fortifying grace. (c) The king of day in his glory. Christ, King and Light of the world. The third Mass and its pledge of eternal life. Emmanuel in glory.

Conclusion.—Ite, Missa est.

Introduction.—The Church is the Spouse of Christ; and no one, it would seem, is better fitted to tell the story of His birth than she herself in the eloquent and beautiful language of her liturgy. Her voice is raised in our midst to-day, before the crib of the new-born God, and with her wealth of ritual and ceremony she seeks to explain to us the unspeakable mystery and to impress its holy significance on our souls. None ever knew or loved the Babe of Bethlehem as does she. And, therefore, none can speak with the same truth and warmth, out of such an abundance of the heart, of this holy event, which she has fondled in her memory for ages and yearly announces to the millions of the children of men.

I. The Church is the best preacher, and the Holy Mass her best sermon, on Christmas, if we but understand the language in which she speaks to us the message of the day. True, the Mass is a sacrifice, and is commemorative of the great mysteries of Holy Week, the Last Supper and the tragedy on Mount Calvary. But how truly does it represent the mystery which this day recalls! You will notice the surprising and touching significance of the most solemn functions of the holy rite so familiar to us, how they set forth the different events of the memorable night when Christ was born into the world, and illustrate their meaning. On scarcely another festival of the year is the Holy Sacrifice better adapted

to teach in an impressive manner the lessons of which the Church wishes her children to be ever mindful.

(*a*) You have heard the "Gloria in excelsis Deo" to-day, as you have heard it often. But why has the mighty hymn to-day an unwonted ring and sweep? Why are its tones more penetrating, its accents more convincing, its melody more subtle? Why does it seem on this day a new song? Because, of course, it is the Christmas hymn by excellence. It is the song the angels sang when they came rushing forth in multitudes from the heights of heaven on the first Christmas night to contemplate the face of the newborn Babe, bringing along with them some of the melody of heaven: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." And those sublime notes the Church has taken up and repeated a-down the ages, adding to the angels' words their natural commentary and continuing the song: "We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, we thank Thee for Thy great glory!" And to-day, after all the centuries, it rings out afresh through this "House of Bread," this new Bethlehem, where God-made man resides, as it rang through the night around the crib of the same God when He lay newborn in the arms of the Virgin Mother. How easy it is for us to assist in spirit at the mystery of Christ's birth with this anthem resounding in our ears?

(*b*) And is it not a fact that as we bend low at the moment of the consecration, we assist not merely in spirit, but in very fact, at the renewal, over the gulf of twenty centuries, of the mystery of Christmas? The moment arrives. The priest pronounces the words of tremendous import over the wheaten wafer, the almighty power of God is called into action on the stone of the altar; and Christ is born again, Christ is present, Christ lives really, truly, substantially, in the hands of His minister. He has come again as truly God, yet as helpless, between consecrated priestly fingers, as when He first came forth into the world from Mary's chaste womb. Mary's Child, the divine Babe, was God and Man, the Word made flesh. Here we have the Eucharistic re-birth of what the Virgin gave to the world in the lowly shrine of Bethlehem—Christ's Body and Blood, His soul and divinity. He comes now as He came then, by virtue of divine omnipotence, by means of a human instrument chosen, commissioned, consecrated. Let us adore with the shepherds the divine Babe on the altar.

(*c*) "Let us go over to Bethlehem," said the shepherds, "and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord has showed to us." Bethlehem is here, my brethren, Bethlehem truly, Bethlehem literally. More worthy is this temple to be called Bethlehem, for Bethlehem means House of Bread; and, whereas, in the old-time Bethlehem, the land of Juda, the majesty of God appeared veiled under the form of flesh, here we behold Him hidden beneath the appearance of bread. It was foretold by the prophets ages before the event, that the Saviour of the world should be born in Bethlehem, which, being interpreted, signifies House of Bread. And when we witness the prophecy fulfilled before our eyes to-day, when we see God enthroned here this morning on our altar under the form of the heavenly food, there arises unbidden before our mind from out the memory of the long past the picture of the original Bethlehem, where He was born in the flesh who was later to say: "I am the Bread of life. . . . This is the Bread that came down from heaven. . . . He that eateth this Bread shall live forever. . . . For My flesh is meat, indeed."

(*d*) Surely we have hastened here to a veritable Bethlehem, the House of Bread celestial; and in multitudes, in order to console the loneliness of the newborn God who, when He first came, had none to keep Him company, none to honor His coming among men but a few shepherds: the rest of men were too busy with occupations and pleasures. They turned away from their doors the mother who was about to bring Him forth, and she was obliged to seek the poor shelter of a cave in the hillside. But we have adorned the house which He deigns to honor by His holy Presence; we have made rich His tabernacles among us with gold and marble and precious stones, with fine linen and costly decorations; our poor gifts would make amends for the neglect of His unfeeling creatures. We have made light dispel the darkness of the night of His coming. We have brought with us fervor, the warmth of piety and zeal, to make Him forget the coldness of that drear December night when the sharp winds howled through the open cave and the breath of dumb beasts alone softened the deadly chill of the air. And on hearts pure from sin we offer Him a resting-place which recalls by contrast the hardness of the barren ground and the rough straw of the manger.

(*e*) Ah, that Christmas Communion! How fitting it is that we should make it! How well do we call it "our Christmas duty!"

A duty, but one to which no law binds us except the law of gratitude. We all feel that strange sense of duty to-day; and its source, if we wished to trace it, would be found in a sentence of the gospel of the day, which sentence is the saddest for humankind that pen ever wrote and utters a charge so disgraceful and humiliating, yet so true, that one would wish to efface it in one's own blood. "He came to His own," says St. John, "and His own received Him not. . . . He was in the world . . . and the world knew Him not." The world was dark at His coming, dark not alone by reason of the absence of the sun's light, but dark in sin and vice, dark in passion and the excess of wickedness. He was the Light. "And the light shineth in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it." "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." No wonder, then, if we have faith and love for God and are grateful for His mercies, no wonder that we wish to receive Him to-day, of all days, the divine Babe into our souls, and house Him in our heart of hearts, and offer Him a peaceful conscience to be His dwelling-place forever! And receiving Him we shall see with the eyes of faith what the shepherds saw, what Joseph and Mary beheld with transports of happiness. And this shall be our reward: "But as many as received Him, He gave the power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name."

(*f*) Herod had no welcome for the Infant God; the brutal king did not suffer Him to remain long in the House of Bread, where nothing but the poorest of abodes sheltered Him. Even Christ's sojourn on earth was short; a scant thirty-three years did men allow Him to dwell in their midst. Yet He had to be the Emmanuel, which means, God with us. For thus spoke the prophet: "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel," which—says the Gospel—being interpreted is, God with us. Better than Bethlehem of old is our Bethlehem here where resides the perpetual Emmanuel and is ever present with us on the altar, not for a few days or months or years, but all days and nights unto the end of time. Here truly the infant Jesus verifies to the letter the title, given Him at His birth, of "God with us," and is with us in a perpetual Bethlehem, with the Nativity mystery unceasingly renewed; and the joy of to-day is not tempered with the sad thought that the glorious event will not be enacted again to-morrow.

II. Thus does the Holy Sacrifice speak to us and tell us in its own mystic way the story, ever old yet ever new, with which the Church desires our minds to be refreshed on this solemn day. But there is something added to the ordinary significance of the Mass; there is something intended still further to make vivid the memory of the stupendous event commemorated and to impress us with its meaning. The liturgy of Christmas is peculiar in that it provides for three Masses instead of one and allows the priest on this one day of the year the privilege of thrice offering the Holy Sacrifice. In the regular order of things, the first Mass should be celebrated at midnight, another at dawn, and the third in the full light of day. For reasons of prudence this order is not observed in our country. However, the hours for services which have been substituted for the liturgical hours approximate closely enough to enable us, without forcing the imagination, to suppose, for instance, five o'clock to be midnight, and seven the hour of sunrise; at ten o'clock we have the Mass of the day.

Now, what means this observance and what does it say to us concerning the mystery of the feast? Christ was born of the Virgin Mary but once. But we may easily perceive how Christ, who is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, may be said to have manifested Himself by a triple birth. He had a birth in the flesh; He is born by grace in our souls, by the grace which He merited for us as Man-God; and there was a generation in glory when before all time He came forth from the Father, to Whom He is a Son and an Equal. It is this threefold generation that the Church recalls in the liturgy of the three Masses.

(*a*) Midnight seems the hour best fitted to remind us of the temporal birth of the Son of God. He was born in the dead of night. Why? Was it because then all nature is hushed in peace? Or was the blanket of darkness intended to hide from men's eyes the spectacle which they were unworthy to behold? Or was it to verify literally the fact that when He came men heedless slept, or sinful pursued their works of evil? Or was it to typify the black, gloomy shades which covered the spiritual world and enveloped men's souls? The world had traveled far from the Light of God. Ignorance, idolatry, vice had obscured the heavens. Only a few glimmering stars kept vigil over the divine crib. It was in this midnight of the world that the Babe was born.

And so at this solemn hour the priest ascends the altar to renew the mystery of Bethlehem and celebrate the birth of Christ in the flesh. Here pious hands, in imitation of the Virgin Mother, have prepared the crib; here the faithful impersonate the invisible army of the angelic hosts who alone greeted the coming of the Redeemer, take up their glorious hymn and sing: "Gloria in excelsis Deo." On such a night, at such an hour, Bethlehem's star first appeared in the firmament; its light has guided us hither, and we have come to witness a miracle not unlike that which it announced. The same angels surround the altar, they adore the same Jesus.

It is said that when the angels heard it proclaimed that the Son of God was to be born in the flesh, to unite in His person the human and divine natures, some of them grew jealous of the dignity thus conferred on men; they revolted and were cast down into hell. Hitherto, the Second Divine Person had been Emmanuel to the spirits, God with them; henceforth, He should be also Emmanuel to men, God with us. For with our nature He took upon Himself our sins; and, removing our sins, He removed the only obstacle that kept us apart from God, He united us to God; God in Christ became God with us, became truly in nature our Emmanuel. Such is the great significance of this first birth in the flesh. The angels were jealous of the shepherds who were to be honored with a vision of a brother in the Child-God, born of Mary in the still hours of the first Christmas night.

Now, what the crib did for man in general, Holy Communion does for us individually; it effects between God and us an ineffable union. When we receive, we incorporate God, so to speak; we become one with Him in the flesh, since His sacred Flesh and Blood is made our food and drink. Could God be closer naturally to us than this? Could He be more truly our Emmanuel? Here, as well as in Bethlehem's grotto, it may truly be said that there is no nation that hath God so near to them as our God is near to us; no, not even the angels of the court of heaven. And well might they envy us our glorious lot.

(*b*) But it were little to have brought us thus close to God by removing the obstacle of sin through the temporal birth of the Son of God, if this union were not to be preserved by another birth, a birth of grace and mercy in the hearts of men. There is small profit in being sons of God in the flesh if we do not become

one with Him by grace. Emmanuel in the flesh is nothing if we are denied Emmanuel in the spirit. It was not enough that God should become incarnate to redeem us; our salvation depends on having the merits of the Incarnation and Redemption applied to our souls and thus preserve us forever from sin. This is what the divine Infant really did; He did it by certain means, of which the Mass as Sacrifice and Sacrament is the principal; He first did it when the light was made to shine at Christmas down in the hearts of the simple shepherds and faith was born in their souls—and they beheld the Babe in its mother's arms, they believed, they knelt, they adored.

The Second Mass shadows forth this mysterious birth. It was at the first blush of morn that the shepherds, after hearing the glad tidings of the angels, left the flocks over which they had watched the whole night with vigilant eye, and hurried over the hills to Bethlehem to see the wondrous thing which had occurred—a Babe in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, a Saviour that was born to them. He was the rising Day-star; without the day was breaking; and in the souls of the shepherds a new light began to point, a new warmth to be felt, a new life to stir. The face of that divine Child shone full in their souls and left its impress there, just as in the beginning the Almighty Father breathed into Adam's face the spirit of life: "And man became a living soul," says Holy Writ. And so these humble men, adorers of the Redeemer, received the mysterious vitality of supernatural grace in their beings and became living souls after a new fashion, according to the divine Image and Likeness restored within them.

And so it is that, when the dews of heaven have fallen upon the thirsty earth in the night and the sun ascends the skies, the priest ascends the altar to let loose the floods of God's grace upon the world of men's souls by virtue of the Adorable Sacrifice. Let but the Author of grace, offered to us on the altar, come into our souls, and henceforth nothing under heaven can destroy our union with God save only our own personal malice. Then truly we may say with St. Paul: "And I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me'.' For, if in becoming man God made Himself like unto us, in being born again in our souls by grace He makes us become like unto Him, "partakers," as says St. Peter, of the divine nature. With, then, God within us, and we faithful to Him, let our enemies rage and plot our ruin by temptations and wiles.

"They shall fight against thee," says the prophet, "and they shall not prevail, for I am with thee, thy Emmanuel" by grace.

(*c*) By the hour of the third offering of the Holy Sacrifice the sun has mounted to his zenith, to the height of his glory. Of the king of day the Scripture thus speaks: "He hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way, his going out is from the end of heaven, and his circuit even to the end thereof; and there is no one that can hide himself from his heat." With what lordly supremacy does he rule over the earth! In his absence darkness covered the world and a mist the people; the people sat in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death. But now the light has sprung up and enlightened every living thing.

The sun in his noonday splendor is but an image of the King of Light born to us to-day, whose throne is set in the skies and whose empire extends to the ends of the earth, from generation unto generation. As says the Psalmist: "The Lord hath prepared His throne in heaven: and His kingdom shall rule over all." "Where is He that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and are come to adore Him. But they said to Him: 'In Bethlehem of Juda.'" True, there is little token of royalty in the poor Babe reclining on a manger-throne; but He is one day to answer the royal governor asking if He be king, and say: "Thou sayest it." True, there is little splendor in that poor, barren cave; yet, "again, therefore, Jesus spoke to them, saying: 'I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'" To-day, then, a new King has risen over the world, and in the light of His countenance all just men walk.

But this birth is neither on earth, nor in men's souls. The royal lineage of Christ is derived from the bosom of eternity; "Thou enlightenest," says the Psalmist, "wonderfully from the everlasting hills." Of that mysterious nativity what tongue can speak, when the awfully solemn voice of the Eternal broke the stillness of eternity and spoke: "Thou art my son, this day I have begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession." He would come to earth, this Son of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, equal to His Father in all things; He would come in the fulness of time, be born of a Virgin, and redeem man. And the multitudes of those redeemed by His Blood

He would lead back to the glorious abode of heaven whence He descended and present them to His Father as the choice spoils of His conquest of the earth.

And so for the third time the priest ascends the altar and repeats that Sacrifice whereby Jesus, our King, conquered the world and won for men the eternal happiness and glory of heaven. Again are opened in the unbloody Oblation the wounds of Jesus, those Fountains springing up unto life everlasting. The same Babe offers His sacred Body, crushed like the grapes and the wheaten grain, as a Manna come down from heaven, as a Food of which it is said: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day." How truly does this third Mass, while commemorating the eternal generation of the Son of God by the Father, point to our union with Him in His Father's house where there are many mansions, and where He has gone to prepare a place for us? Not merely points, but furnishes us with means of attaining thereto, with a pledge that we shall not fail to obtain the prize. Sons of God that we are, "heirs also; heirs, indeed, of God, and joint heirs with Christ"; thus is Emmanuel secured unto us, God with us, with us this time not alone in the flesh, nor alone by grace, but Emmanuel in glory, "where God will be all in all."

When holy Simeon had gazed upon "the Christ of the Lord" and held the divine Babe in his arms, he prayed thus: "Now Thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace; because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to the revelation of the gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." And so when, with the *Ite, Missa est,* the priest dismisses us after assisting at this Eucharistic representation of the Christmas mystery, let us depart murmuring a heartfelt "Deo Gratias: thanks be to God," in peace with Him, with ourselves and with all the world.

IX. MUSIC, ITS PLACE IN THE LITURGY

BY THE REV. HUGH T. HENRY, LL.D., LITT.D.

SYNOPSIS.—St. Thomas Aquinas argues the desirability of music as an aid to devotion. St. Augustine gave practical testimony to the same fact. Music at Solemn Mass: in the "Ordinary" and in the "Proper." Minute descriptions of its function. Its power in making the sacred texts clearly audible, emphatic, and in conferring splendor on the divine service. The propriety of congregational song, especially in answering the Celebrant. Music in the Divine Office. Its requisites of holiness, universality, artistic quality. It is a servant, not a master.

"Sing aloud, O Sion, praising
Christ, thy Royal Shepherd, raising
Hymns of love and songs of joy:
Let the music sound forever,
Never ceasing, tiring never;
All thy powers of praise employ."

I have taken my text from the *Lauda Sion,* that grand medieval Sequence dedicated to the glory of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. In this hymn, St. Thomas Aquinas, the "Angelic Doctor," summons all Christians to sing the praises of the "Bread of Angels." It is interesting to observe the prominence accorded thus to music by the greatest theological doctor of the Church. Indeed, as if this beautiful invitation to sacred song had not exhausted his appreciation of its power and fitness for the praise of God, the saint continues his thought in the third stanza:

"Sing His praise with voice sonorous;
Every ear shall hear the chorus
Swell in melody sublime:
For this day the Shepherd gave us
Flesh and Blood to feed and save us,
Lasting to the end of time."

It is clear that, in this outburst of loving affection, the inmost heart of the saint speaks to us. But, while the heart thus had its language, the head also had its reasons; and these are given by the saint in colder and more philosophic terms in his immortal *Summa Theologica:* "Vocal praise is necessary," he argues, "in order to stir up in men's hearts an affection for God; and, there-

fore, whatever serves this end may become the subject of religious laws. Now, it is manifest that men's minds are variously affected by the varying melodies of music. . . . And so it has been wisely ordained that singing should be a part of divine worship, in order that sluggish hearts might be the more easily roused to devotion." He immediately adds the testimony of St. Augustine to the same effect, and quotes his famous declaration in his *Confessions:* "So strongly moved was I by the voices of thy sweetly singing Church that I wept, listening to thy hymns and canticles."

From this testimony of saints and doctors of the Church, we can perceive that to utter the praises of God in musical language is at once a prompting of the heart and a dictate of the reason. And it is not strange that the Church should have been very zealous in the employment of music in all her solemn functions. Throughout her long life, indeed, she has been not only the preserver of the arts, but also, in many respects, their creator as well, or at least their stimulus and guide to constantly higher levels of religious expressiveness. She has used them to augment the splendor of her public prayer and her Divine Sacrifice; and, in doing this, she has purified and ennobled them. But music, the subtlest and most mysterious of all the arts, she has taken under her protection in a very special manner, has used in all her solemn functions, and has dignified beyond all the others by making it an essential feature of her solemn worship. In doing this, she has met the needs of both heart and head, as St. Augustine and St. Thomas have shown us.

To what extent does she use this subtle art of music? To answer this question, we need only reflect on the wondrous way in which music precedes, accompanies and follows the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. But to understand better the mind of the Church, it is important to know that, while the central action of the Mass remains always the same, in many respects the auxiliary portions differ every day, and thus illustrate, throughout the Liturgical Year, the various phases of the life of our Lord upon earth. The unvarying portion of the Mass is styled the *Ordinary,* and comprises usually the chants known as the Kyrie, the Gloria, the Credo, the Sanctus and Benedictus, and the Agnus Dei. The varying portions are styled the *Proper,* since they make the Mass "appropriate," as it were, to the varying Feasts of the Church Year. The *Proper* comprises the chants known as the Introit, the Gradual

(which in certain seasons is replaced by a Tract or an Alleluia, and which on certain feasts will also be followed by a hymn called a Sequence), the Offertory and the Communion. All these portions, whether of the Ordinary or the Proper, are to be sung either by the people or by a choir which shall sing them in the place of the congregation. With this preparatory knowledge, let us in spirit assist at a Solemn Mass.

As the celebrant enters the sanctuary and approaches the altar, the choir sings the Introit, and immediately follows on with the Kyrie. The celebrant then intones the Gloria—that ancient "Morning-hymn" of the Greek Church—whose opening words remind us of the Herald Angels who sang of old to the wondering shepherds at Bethlehem: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." If we follow the sacred function with an understanding mind, we cannot fail to realize how much this grand text gains by its association with music. We shall appreciate this fact more clearly if we compare the rapid progress of a "Low" Mass with the more stately movement of a Solemn Mass. At the "Low" Mass we are hardly conscious that the Gloria is being recited by the celebrant; whereas, at the Solemn Mass, when it is uttered to the strains of music, how vividly it recalls to mind the peace and glory of that night when the heavens were opened and the angelic choir sang of peace on earth and of glory in the highest. And as we listen:

> "In our minds we seem to see
> Shepherds bend adoring knee;
> In our minds we seem to hear
> Blasts from silver trumpets blow,
> As they did, so loud and clear,
> From the battlements of Heaven,
> On that calm and gracious even
> Nineteen hundred years ago."

When the choir has ceased singing, the celebrant addresses to the people, in a musical monotone, the salutation: *Dominus vobiscum*—"The Lord be with you"; and, having received from the people the answer: *Et cum spiritu tuo*—"And with thy spirit," he asks the people to join with him in prayer, saying: *Oremus*—"Let us pray!" After this he utters, in musical cadences, the united, public, universal prayer of the Spouse of Christ. Then the Epistle and Gospel are sung in musical recitation—the loud, clear, orato-

rical tone making the sacred words audible to all in the church, while at the same time the musical cadences indicate the rhetorical divisions of the text. It will be noticed in this connection that music serves the double purpose of adding dignity and splendor to the utterance of the inspired words, and of making them audible and rhetorically intelligible. It is to be noted also that, just as celebrant and congregation interchanged spiritual salutations before the singing of the prayer, so also does the deacon interchange with the congregation similar salutations and divine praises before the singing of the Gospel. Thus it is that music is the vehicle by which the liturgy instructs the faithful in the fact that the adorable Sacrifice is not the work of the priest alone, but of the people also. They are not idly looking on at this Divine Drama; they are to be active participants in its progress and consummation.

In view of this fact—a fact further emphasized when the celebrant turns to the people and says: "Brethren, pray that *my* sacrifice and *yours* may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty" —it does seem to be a matter for deep regret that the whole congregation should sit silent and allow their function to be performed by a few singers in the choir-loft. Our Holy Father, Pius X, desires strongly the revival of the ancient custom of congregational song, which would give full meaning and force to the interchange of salutations between priest and people.

It is equally clear that the next great chant we are to consider, namely, the Credo, should be sung by the whole people. For that common expression of the common faith of Catholic Christendom, intoned by the celebrant, should receive a common utterance by the whole congregation, and not by a few selected singers.

The Credo having been sung, the choir sings the Offertory, while the priest continues the action of the Mass down to the Preface. In the profoundly touching salutations and responses introducing the Preface, we again perceive the necessity for congregational song. *Sursum corda!*—"Lift up your hearts!" cries the priest at the altar to his people. And their answer comes back to him: "We have them lifted to the Lord." But who should—indeed, who can with propriety—say this, save the people who have been thus addressed? Is it really possible that such a momentous assurance can be given adequately by a few singers in the gallery? "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!" sings the priest; and the congregation is to reply, in musical cadences:

"It is meet and just." Thus is ushered in that sublime chant of the Preface, in which the priest speaks not in his own name alone, but as well in the name of the whole people of God. If music were ever inspired, surely the melody of the various prefaces is an inspiration. Week after week, year after year, we have heard those solemn and pathetic cadences, and have never grown weary of them. Of what other oft-repeated song does not the ear finally tire? The priest at length has finished the sublime chant, and the choir breaks forth into the song of the heavenly hosts as described by the Beloved Disciple in his Apocalypse: "Holy, holy, holy." Then, in the Benedictus, we hear the echoes of the first Palm Sunday, when the Jewish populace welcomed Him who came in the name of the Lord—"Hosannah in the highest!"

Shortly after the Consecration, the priest utters musically the greatest of all prayers—the Our Father—the congregation singing the last of the petitions: "But deliver us from evil." Then, after the priest sings: "May the peace of the Lord be always with you," and the people have answered: "And with thy spirit," the choir sings the triple Agnus Dei and the variable text called the Communion. Then the prayers are sung by the priest; the deacon announces, in melody, that the Mass is finished, and the people, still in musical cadences, express their gratitude to God for His infinite condescension.

I have dwelt thus at length on the musical features of the Solemn Mass in order to illustrate the important part taken by music, which envelops and permeates the sacred action in a most striking manner; and also to point to its real power of emphasizing, and beautifying, and interpreting, in its own mysterious language, the meaning and sentiment of the Divine Liturgical Drama of the Solemn Mass. If we have entered sufficiently into the mind of the Church, we shall not easily be betrayed into expressing a preference for Low Mass on the score that we feel more devotion there. The Church is our instructor and guide in the things of God, and in our duty of reverence and of worship; and the Low Mass is only a concession to various difficulties she has had to encounter in the course of the ages.

Another great public prayer of the Church remains to be considered briefly. I mean the Divine Office, which, like the Holy Mass, changes its text every day. It comprises the services called Matins and Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, Compline.

With Vespers we are familiar. Doubtless, many of us also are familiar with Matins and Lauds, because of their rendition in some churches on the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons in Holy Week, at the services known as *Tenebrae*. Vespers and Tenebræ will give us some idea of the prominent place of music in the Divine Office, every part of which is set to musical melodies or cadences.

In the daily devotional life of the Church, the Mass and Office are complementary parts; and both are bathed, as it were, in the unceasing ebb and flow of music.

Since music thus forms so prominent a part of the daily prayer of the Spouse of Christ, it is no wonder that she should have been so careful lest abuses creep into sacred song. Such abuses did occur. Instead of being the obedient servant, music began to assume the air of master in the House of God. The decrees of Councils and moving exhortations of Popes, and especially the recent encyclical of the present reigning Pontiff, Pius X, have striven to purge out the old leaven of unseemliness in the music of the Church and in the manner of its rendition, and to indicate the kinds of music which alone should be allowed in the Church. That music should be artistic, but it must also be holy in spirit, and Catholic or universal in its power of interpreting the emotion of the prayers it voices. It should not smack of the opera or of the theatre or even of the concert-hall. Nothing should be heard in the House of God save that which is ennobling, uplifting, prayerful, gentle with the peacefulness of heaven, and spiritual in every one of its moods. Discoursing thus with God, music should be holy, pure and spiritual, other-worldly in all its yearnings.

It is significant of the importance of music in the sacred liturgy, that Pius X should have made it the subject of his first special law binding the Universal Church. Instead of venturing to complain, or to criticise in any fashion that tender exhortation, and even command, of the Vicar of Christ, we should strive by every means in our power to enforce and to fulfil it.

And, finally, if God has blest us with good voices and musical powers, we should hasten to offer Him tithes of His gifts unto His praise and honor. And we should do this, not grudgingly and hesitatingly, but with all happy zeal and energy. To sing in the choir at Mass and Vespers is, as we have seen, to be honored

by a special participation in the mysteries of religion as exemplified in the sacred liturgy of the Church. But, with whatever kind of voice we may be endowed, it might well be our delight to join in congregational song to the praise of our Maker. And in this connection we may aptly call to mind the strong words of the gentle-minded St. Bernard, when he reprehends those whose monastic life bound them to sing the praises of God in the Church, but who failed in this duty because of slothfulness, or distraction of mind, or—to quote his own expression—"carelessness with respect to their own salvation." In a lesser measure, all of us may apply his reproaches to ourselves, since the Holy Father so urgently desires congregational singing. Those who fail to contribute their part to the singing "do not reflect," says the saint, "that they who withdraw themselves from a common labor, shall also be deprived of the common reward; and that they who defraud the Church of their service, their neighbor of edification, the angels of joy, the saints of glory, and God of worship render themselves unworthy of God's grace, of the guardianship of the angels, of the suffrages of the saints, of their neighbor's help, and of the benefits of the Church. But they who sing properly and with wisdom, saith Abbot Rupert, shall enjoy as a reward the everlasting song of heaven."

It is proper for us, my brethren, to refresh ourselves with such thoughts as these; to look upon the solemn services of the Church as something which most intimately concerns ourselves and our relations to that Supreme Judge whom we are to worship with an intelligent mind and with a devout heart; to offer to Him that kind of service which is most pleasing to Him, rather than satisfactory to our own sense of pleasure or of propriety. If the Church speaks, we must listen to her voice of authority, must take her point of view, must follow her commands. If our own tastes in music are other than those exemplified in her legislation, then we must yield our preferences to her will. And, the more easily to do this, we might well reflect that, as she has been throughout all the ages of her long life the supreme model, even in earthly things, of artistic beauty and appropriateness in her wondrous ceremonial, in her magnificent cathedrals, and in her educational efficiency, so also is her taste—even in a human and earthly way—as to musical appropriateness in her divine services, absolutely unexceptionable from an artistic point of view. If we

differ from her in this we simply confess ourselves to be of poor judgment and of poor taste. The greatest musicians, Protestant as well as Catholic, have hastened to lay at her feet their highest appreciations and commendations for her sense of artistic appropriateness in the sacred music of her services. To this fact, let me, in conclusion, add the words of the Supreme Pastor of Christendom:

"Filled, as we are, with a most ardent desire to see the true Christian spirit flourish in every respect and be preserved by all the faithful, we deem it necessary to provide before aught else for the sanctity and dignity of the temple, in which the faithful assemble for no other object than that of acquiring this spirit from its foremost and indispensable fount, which is the active participation in the most holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church. And it is vain to hope that the blessing of heaven will descend abundantly upon us, when our homage to the Most High, instead of ascending in the odor of sweetness, puts into the hand of the Lord the scourges wherewith of old the Divine Redeemer drove the unworthy profaners from the Temple."

X. ELEMENTS OF STRENGTH IN THE CHURCH

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"O poor little one, tossed by the tempest, without any comfort, behold I will lay thy stones in order, and I will lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy bulwarks of jasper, and thy gates of graven stones, and all thy borders of desirable stones. All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."—Isa. liv, 12, 13.

SYNOPSIS.—The Catholic Church is the most prominent fact in the history of the world. She is the admiration of all. Why? Because of her natural and supernatural organization.
She satisfies the craving of all intellects by the beauty, simplicity, complexity of her teaching; she satisfies the demands of the heart by her liturgy, her devotions; she supplies spiritual activity for all dispositions; she inspires with a deep insight into the supernatural; she gives to life and to things of life their true value; she uplifts and draws by her solidarity; above all, she is of God. Founded by Christ, sanctified and guided by the Holy Ghost, she leads to God. Our duties towards the Church.

I. The study of man, his nature and his actions is an unfading source of interest; his progress in the past, his prospects in the future, supply endless materials for investigation and speculation. Nothing that concerns man is so marvelous and so widely interesting as the dispositions that Providence has made for the salvation of souls. The Catholic Church, which sums up in itself all these dispositions of God and all the action of men in regard to them, has an overpowering fascination for almost every one. She is by no means regarded in the same light by all; she excites totally opposite feelings in different persons; she causes enthusiastic admiration and enthusiastic hatred. None are indifferent, none are neutral, none can despise her. Her grandeur extorts from all, even from her enemies, the homage of their most serious attention. The Church has undeniably been the most prominent fact in the past history of the world; at the present day she holds an influence which is without parallel, both for its depth and intensity, and for the wide area which it affects. This great fact must be of absorbing importance, not only to those whose faith designates the Church as the manifestation of God to man, but to many others, who regard her from the point of view of history, or archeology, or politics, or art, or psychology. Unbelievers have labored, if not as lovingly,

at least as enthusiastically, in studying the Church and her relations with each successive age, and endeavoring to explain the phenomena of her existence. Not one who has approached the task with common honesty and a judicial spirit has ever failed to be struck with amazement at the enormous power of the Church, and to acknowledge with admiration, notwithstanding a general hostility to her, the great benefits she has conferred on human society.

The striking points of excellence in the Church are so numerous that every mind finds something which appeals to its own personality. Every one can find something in the Church which excites his interest, and perhaps his admiration; something which speaks to him of her divinity: a glimmering light of grace, which is designed by God to be followed up till it leads the enquirer to the fulness of truth in union with the Church. Such good points seem to outsiders to account in part for her power and permanent life. Let us consider a few of them. They are such as have been remarked upon from time to time by those who are not members of the Church, and who have seen in them signs of human wisdom, or of clever organization, or of natural enthusiasm, or prudent use of opportunities. We, of course, know that the secret of the Church's life lies in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is with her all days, even to the end of the world, and in the power of the Holy Ghost, who is to teach her all truth, and never suffer the gates of Hell to prevail against her. And as for the extraordinary virtues by which so many Catholics contribute to the general power of the Church, they result, not so much from her discipline and careful teaching, as from that influence of which the text speaks: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord" (Isa. liv, 13). However, there are natural elements that enter into the supernatural strength of the Church; they are part of the equipment with which Jesus Christ has furnished her as the instruments of her success; and through them God works out His purpose.

II. One source of strength that has been frequently remarked is the abundant wealth of the Church in doctrine, devotion, and practical piety, out of which she is able to satisfy every class of men, both simple and cultivated, and every faculty of mind, or imagination, or heart. Systems of philosophy have been adapted only to the few, the educated of one country or one age: they have never extended to the great masses of population. Religions also have generally had a special national character, which limited their in-

fluence to certain races, to Orientals, or to dwellers in the North, to Arabs, to Greeks, or barbarians. Some religions are eminently for respectable people, others are intolerable to any but the half-educated. (1) The Catholic Church, with her theological treasures, can satisfy the most philosophical searchers after abstract truth, and at the same time her doctrines are simple enough to be grasped by the most illiterate. She has that within her which enabled her to criticise the barbarians who overthrew the Roman Empire, and to meet the wants of the feudal ages; and to-day she is equally at home in the wigwam of the Indian, in universities and parliaments, in the midst of an age of commerce and free democracy.

(2) A great writer has pointed out how the Church is able to find employment for all abilities, and religious work for all who wish to serve God and their neighbor. Other religions would be unable to find a place for a St. Theresa, or a St. Francis of Assisi. The religious orders in the Catholic system provide what thousands crave for, and only a few have been able to attain by exceptional abilities elsewhere. Women as well as men, the unlearned as well as the learned, the weak as well as the strong, have their various works and their own proper positions in the house of God. Some study and some teach; some nurse the sick, others visit the poor; some cultivate the arts and sciences, others the fields; some ransom captives, others civilize savages, others give shelter to wayfarers; some serve God in silence and contemplation, others by their eloquence, many walk in the lowly but secure path of obedience, and there are positions of authority for those who are adapted to command. There is no waste of material in the laboratories of the Church; there is no character that cannot be turned to some of the multifarious purposes of religion and made into a source of strength and life.

(3) Further, there is the great variety of devotions which the Church provides. Here again she differs from other religious bodies. There must be some flexibility and adaptation, if a thing is to suit millions of different characters. Other religions are stunted and starved as to devotional practises; they are flexible only in matters of doctrine by allowing wide facilities for the denial of every revealed truth. The Catholic Church in doctrines of faith is necessarily rigid and invariable, for truth is one only; but in her devotions she provides us with a most rich variety of spiritual food. The liturgy is grand and imposing as celebrated in a

Cathedral with incense, lights, splendid vestments, solemn harmonies, and majestic movements; and this is the same as the simple, business-like service, the more impressive because there is no striving for impressiveness, celebrated quietly at early morning in the Catacombs, or in a poor shed in an unsettled country, or a city chapel, or a cavern on a mountainside in days of persecution. Besides the liturgy we have popular devotions in the vernacular, hymns and litanies, and rosaries, and the Way of the Cross. Then there are the confraternities in honor of the Sacred Heart, the Precious Blood, the Blessed Virgin, the Angels, with their prayers and practises, all stirring up fervor and deep attachment to religion. Then we have the immense abundance of manuals, and prayer-books, and meditations for private and public use: novenas and festivals, Benediction and exposition, the mysteries of our Lord's life and His Blessed Mother's, pilgrimages and holy seasons. In all this there is enough to satisfy every temperament and every need of the soul, something to meet every mood of joy or sorrow.

The overflowing, inexhaustible life of the Church manifests itself in these various forms, and these react and help to stir up a more vigorous life of fervor in the souls of the faithful. None need be left dissatisfied, none need complain of a void that Catholic doctrine and devotions do not fill; all can find assurance in doubt, comfort in desolation, strength in temptation.

III. A second source of strength in the Church is to be found in the dispensations of those who form its rank and file. It is a peculiarity of Catholics that they, more than any other body of Christians, have an insight into the unseen, a certainty about things that are beyond the grasp of simple reason, a sense of the reality of the supernatural. This is attributed by outsiders to natural causes, the bent of certain minds, the thoroughness of their religious education. But it is not merely natural. It is due to the inspired habit of faith to that divine gift which gives men a readiness to believe, and constancy in holding fast. This hardly exists in the followers of other religions: these have a sort of persuasion, but not anything like certainty; they are attached to forms of words but do not grasp the realities which these words represent; they may observe a considerable regularity of life, but it is not grounded on firm principle. Such persons are visibly disconcerted when brought face to face with any religious fact;

they are unfamiliar with anything beyond the names of such things. Cardinal Newman somewhere describes at length the nature of their religious sense in his early days. It did not, he says, go further than a general acknowledgment of some kind of overruling Providence, it only apprehended God as a sort of abstraction; it was familiar with Jesus in the gospels, but would have been shocked at the definite statement that Jesus Christ is Uncreated God, the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity. Anything that definitely embodies positive doctrine is regarded by them as a coarse and material product of Catholic imagination.

How is it with Catholics? To them the unseen world is as much a matter of course and of clear assurance as any foreign country of which they have seen the maps and studied the manners and customs. God, though invisible, is felt by them to be present, just as the authority of an invisible central government is felt in a remote village. Our Lord Jesus Christ is not an historical personage belonging to a distant epoch; He is some one whom they can address in prayer, who is conscious of their appeals and answers them, to whom they can pour out their sorrows and commit the care of their interests. The devout Catholic lives in the companionship of his Angel Guardian, he speaks daily to the Blessed Mother of God, to the apostles and saints of former times; he is not cut off by a rigid barrier from his friends departed; they are as much alike to him as if they had only gone beyond the seas; he keeps up a certain correspondence with them, praying for them if they are in Purgatory, asking their prayers if in Heaven.

The doctrine of the Real Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and the continual enforcement of it in all the ceremonies and surroundings of worship does more than anything else to fix and crystallize into solid form the Catholic perception of the supernatural. The Sacraments have the same effect; they are not to us merely comforting forms, or dictates of piety and propriety, but they are actual remission of sin, a conveyance of definite powers. So real is their effect on the soul that it overflows upon the body, changing the aspect of the countenance; or, as with Extreme Unction, reducing the fevered temperature of the sick.

One way in which this appreciation of the reality of the unseen strengthens the Church, is that it makes men feel the reality and importance of that which is unseen in their own lives. It causes their religion to go down beneath the visible surface, and work

its effect, not on the outward actions, but on the springs of action. Their inmost secret thoughts are open and bare to the invisible beings who are so real to them; their mental actions are as much controlled by those presences as outward actions are checked by the presence of our own fellow-men; inward habits, like outward habits, grow into conformity with the standard of those with whom we habitually live. So in Catholics there is more consistency as to religion than in other men; there is a greater harmony between the inward and outward life, whether that life be good or bad, and there is more reality. Catholics, God knows, are often bad enough; but it is rare to find among them specimens of that type which is becoming so terribly common, the modern Pharisee, the whited sepulchre full of all filthiness, who is the most respectable and pious of men in outward demeanor, and commits the most infamous crimes when he thinks himself safe from detection. Such beings are the inevitable product of these modern popular forms of religion which have discarded dogmas and the supernatural.

IV. As any one lives more in the supernatural world, he sets less value on that which is natural, he becomes indifferent to it, disinterested, and then self-sacrificing. The virtues which the Catholic Church specially insists on lead to the same spirit of sacrifice. Humility reduces our overweening estimate of our own importance and the value we set on ourselves. Generous charity causes us to render love and service to God and man. The hope of Heaven and the sight of Jesus on the Cross make us ready to endure suffering with joy for the sake of justice and truth. Hence arises that spirit which gives the greatest moral strength to the character and produces the greatest effects in the world of men—the spirit of unselfishness, of indifference to gain, to honors, to life, to death. Lacordaire has observed that it is a law of the world that those who are ready to die will always master those who want to live. Indifference to human life—the life of other men—is almost the greatest of vices. It was one chief element of the successes gained by Mahomet and by the reformers of the sixteenth century. But it is a force that cannot endure for ever. There is a greater and more lasting force—indifference to one's own life. This was the strength of the early Church, and one great cause of its wonderful success. The same spirit is as vivid, as indomitable, and as widely spread in the Catholic Church of the present day as it was in the days of Nero, Diocletian and Elizabeth. It is not often that it has

to be exercised in the same circumstances as then, in the endurance of torture and public execution; but it exists unchanged; and its existence makes possible those many other heroic sacrifices of home, and comfort, and riches, and love, and name and fame, which have only ceased to be heroic, because they are so numerous as to be commonplace in the Catholic Church. Now and then it happens that some one out of the crowd of heroic lives in the Church is brought into unexpected prominence, and the whole world is moved; every heart, not entirely dead to honor and love, throbs with generous emotion, forgets for a moment all prejudice and pays its homage to the Church which bears such children. In every part of the earth men and women, full of the same heroic spirit, are working indefatigably in the cause of God and His Church. Every one of those lives, and every action of these lives, advances the holy cause. They do not need to be published abroad in order to be effectual: they do their work secretly and gradually, but infallibly. Nothing falls useless to the ground; every new force that comes upon the earth has its full effect, whether it be a momentary ray of sunlight, or a word that comes from a heart inspired by divine love. What need we more to convince us of the inexhaustible strength of the Catholic Church, and of the enormous results which must follow at some future time from the expenditure of so much of the highest human force accompanied by the grace of God?

V. The last source of strength that we shall notice is the solidarity of all the members of the Church. They all have the same views about things spiritual, all have the same aspirations, all live by the same rules, all work according to the same methods. They form one compact, solid, united body. There is the completest unity of mind and heart, there is instant communication between the head and the remotest members, as through the nerves of the human body; there is a most strong organization, which is all the stronger because it is not mechanical and rigid, but spontaneous and spiritual. So the Church goes on in every country of the world, and in all ages, pursuing the same course, working in the same way, hampered always by external impediments, thrown back at times, sometimes having her work obliterated and being obliged to recommence from the beginning, and yet she is always on the whole advancing. And no wonder. Having such solidarity, she must have invincible strength and unfailing life. Union of this kind is a source of enormous power, even though it be in a small

body. The Catholic Church having such unity, and being at the same time universal in extent, has a strength greater than that of any empire, any nation, or any combination of mankind. She does not exert her strength actively, *i. e.*, by physical violence, by military conquest, by enforced rule, by armed resistance, as do the powers of this world. She is to that extent weak, and lies at the mercy of her enemies. But where she is weak there she is strong. There is such a thing as passive strength, which may be able to repel and outlast the most violent assaults of active strength. All the forces of the Church, her universality, her perpetuity, her unity, run into strength of the passive sort. Her strength is a kind which is not adapted to wield the sword, therefore it is of a kind which can never perish by the sword. It is simply beyond the bounds of possibility that the violence of the world, its frauds, persecutions, calumnies, enticements, should ever destroy the invulnerable unity of the Catholic Church. She could only be conceivably destroyed by a power that should be at least her equal. But it cannot be expected that any human combination should ever extend itself to a universality such as that of the Church; and even if universal, its very greatness would make it impossible that it should last; and even if it had perpetual life, the conditions of the human mind would be enough to render such a unity as that of the Church absolutely unattainable. Therefore, in the positive strength of her unity the Church will outlast all her enemies; therefore, "no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that resisteth thee in judgment thou shalt condemn" (Isa. liv, 17). Therefore, "the nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish and the gentiles shall be wasted with desolation" (Isa. lx, 12).

The four points we have been considering are some, out of many others, that are frequently put forward in speech and writing by those who do not accept the Catholic Church as a natural explanation of the unusual phenomena which she exhibits. But no natural causes are a sufficient explanation. If they could produce certain effects in the Catholic Church, they would produce the same in other religious bodies. As these results are unattainable in other religions, the presumption is that they have proceeded from some exceptional cause which acts only in the Catholic Church. When investigators think that they have discovered the secret of success, in the Church's organization, or in her treasures of learning and

devotion, or in the devotedness of her children, and that they have escaped the necessity of attributing it to God, they have only removed their difficulty one step farther back. They have produced facts which are connected directly with the Church's success and partially account for it; but whence came these facts? They require to be accounted for, because they are as supernatural as the effects which they profess to explain, and they cannot be accounted for except as the work of God. Whence is that abounding life which exhibits such undying fertility in religious organizations and forms of devotion, unless it be from God? Why have Catholics such an exceptional insight into supernatural truths, so much clearness about them, such constancy in holding to them, unless it be that they have received an exceptional influx of the Holy Spirit? Whence is that heroic self-abnegation which other men can only admire and not imitate? How account for the singular unity of the Catholic Church, unless it be that she was the one for whom our Lord prayed after the last supper, "that they may be made perfect in one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee" (John xvii, 21, 23). The attempts to explain away the divinity of the Catholic Church only serve to bring it out into clearer light.

Our four points, besides teaching us admiration and confidence in the Church, should also remind us of our duties to her. We should make use of the spiritual learning she offers us, and fix upon something in her abundant literature which may instruct us and excite us to holiness of life; we should also select some devotions for special cultivation. Secondly, we should be careful not only to believe, but to keep vividly before us the supernatural world, the universal presence of God, the special presence of Jesus in the tabernacle, and our communion with the saints in heaven and the souls in Purgatory. Thirdly, let us strive to do some work for God, not something that is easy, and pleasant, and costs us nothing, but something that demands effort, perseverance and self-sacrifice. And lastly, let us endeavor to draw more closely the bonds of unity with our brethren. As we are one in faith, let us also be one in charity. Let us obliterate all artificial distinctions, put an end to all discussions, forget our own rights, forgive others' wrongs, and love and help one another as members of the one family. So shall we not only sanctify our own souls, but we shall help to strengthen the whole Church of God and hasten her triumph.

XI. THE CIRCUMCISION

BY THE REV. WILLIAM GRAHAM.

"And after eight days were accomplished that the child should be circumcised; his name was called Jesus."—Luke ii, 21.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Meaning and origin of rite of Circumcision. Sacramental amongst Jews. Probably remitted original sin through prevision of merits of Christ. Cruel rite taken up as basis of Covenant with Abraham. Triple origin assigned, each suggesting appropriate thoughts.

I. Instituted as tribal mark.

II. Instituted as sacrificial rite.

III. Instituted as preservative against disease.

I. It marked off Israel from all other nations. Hence, uncircumcision, (a) a term of reproach, like heathen or pagan amongst us. Strangers entering fold of Israel had to submit to it. Cause of trouble in infant church; (b) in this sense a type of Baptism, now the tribal mark of the new Israel. The old rite branded flesh, the new, spirit, in imprinting a character. Do we esteem Baptism or fulfil its attendant duties as Jews did circumcision?

II. Circumcision, a painful sacrificial rite, dedicatory of one's person to God; (a) sacrifice, ever deemed a necessary element of public worship, implies change, suffering or death of outward object or victim: atonement for sin; (b) sacrifice of Christ on Cross sole adequate sin offering. His atoning sacrifice for sin culminating on Calvary, may be said to have begun in circumcision, first shedding of the precious Blood; survives, and is perpetuated mystically in clean oblation of Holy Mass.

III. According to some, circumcision instituted only on hygienic grounds; said to have safeguarded from many forms of bodily disease. Symbolically, is a sign of purity of heart, and cleanliness of life, in cutting away roots and seat of evil. Sources of life often turned into springs of death, both in the natural and spiritual order. Symbol of Sacramental fountains, that cleanse and safeguard soul from disease of sin.

Conclusion.—One main lesson to be learned, need of mystic circumcision. Carnal rite abolished; symbolic, abides. To be practised in cutting off, (a) all undue attachment to wealth, (b) all undue attachment to pleasure.

The feast we keep to-day calls to mind Christ's first shedding of blood, and the bestowal on Him of the holy name of Jesus, *i. e.*, Saviour. The rite of Circumcision had a sacramental character amongst the Jews. Catholic writers hold that this rite remitted original sin, thus imparting grace, not in itself, but through the future merits of Christ. It was in this way a type of Baptism, cleansing the soul, not by water, but in one's own blood. The rite was chosen as a symbol of the alliance or covenant between God and His people. They entered into God's family or nation, undertaking to suffer for their sins, by shedding their blood; and in return, God undertook,

as it were, to send a Redeemer or Messias, who should reconcile them to Himself, and so purchase their redemption by shedding His Blood in atonement for sin. Thus it became a Jewish sacrament, securing the forgiveness of sin, through the prevision of the merits of the promised Saviour. Over and beyond Contrition, rightly called the Circumcision of the heart, we reasonably infer from God's known mercy and goodness, in promising a Saviour, the existence of some outward rite or symbol, operative through His merits, for the remission of sin in both sexes. From the time of Abraham this symbol was, in the males of Israel, the rite of Circumcision.

Not that the rite was unknown before the days of this holy patriarch. As may be seen from a mural tablet in the ruined temple of Karnac, it was practised by the ancient Egyptians as far back as fourteen centuries before Christ, and was known to peoples,, as far apart as the ancient Aztecs of Mexico and the modern Kaffirs of Africa. Its antiquity is denoted by the fact that up till recently, amongst the Jews, it was performed with a *stone* instrument. Thus, a rite common to other nations, was made the basis of a covenant with Abraham, just as the natural phenomenon of the rainbow was made the symbol of God's promise to Noe. Circumcision was performed by the father of the child, and sometimes even by the mother (Exod. iv, 25), so that our Lady may have witnessed in agony the first shedding of the precious Blood in the cave of Bethlehem, as on Calvary she beheld the last.

A triple origin is ascribed to the rite of Circumcision. Some see in it merely a tribal or national mark, others a sort of initial human sacrifice to God, whilst a third class of writers say it was adopted on hygienic grounds, as a preservative against disease. There is a certain amount of instructive symbolism contained in all three. The thoughts thereby suggested will form the matter of our discourse to-day.

I. Though ever a religious rite amongst the people of God, it was, at the same time, a badge of national life. It marked off the people of God as a nation apart. The uncircumcised were cut off from communion with those so favored; this rite admitting them to a share in the blessings and privileges exclusively reserved to the children of Abraham. Hence, converts from the surrounding nations, on seeking admittance into the religion of Israel, had to submit to it. So distinctive was circumcision of the name and

nation of the Jews that one of the main difficulties of the Church, in Apostolic times, was the protection of the Gentile converts against the tyranny of subjection to this painful rite. St. Paul stood almost alone in claiming for them "the liberty of the children of God," "the freedom" from the ritual of the old law, "wherewith Christ has made us free."

As a tribal mark, circumcision was a type and emblem of Baptism. The narrow Hebrew covenant with Abraham was merged into the worldwide covenant with Christ, and we are now washed in the waters of Baptism—typically, the Blood of Christ, as were the Jews in circumcision. "From stones God can raise up children to Abraham." Circumcision was the door of entry into the Jewish nation; Baptism is the gate of the Church, the way into the Kingdom of God—the tribal mark of His chosen race. This is the new birth, by water and the Holy Spirit: "Amen, I say to you, unless a man is born again he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." "Go ye teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" . . . "He that is not baptised will be condemned." "Be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins" (Acts ii, 38). Unlike circumcision, which impressed its mark merely on the flesh, the holy baptismal rite brands our very souls with the indelible spiritual mark called character. Nothing can efface this sign of the Son of God.

It is noteworthy that our Lord was circumcised on the eighth day after birth, and received His name, just as our children are admitted into the Church, and named, at about the same interval. Our Lord was not bound by a law, of which, He, as God, was the framer. Sinless, and speckless as man, He needed neither type, nor reality of forgiveness and cleansing away of sin, yet to set us an example, of "fulfilling all justice," of submitting to all just laws, binding on sinners, He chose to submit both to the circumcision of His nation and to the baptism of John. He thus, by circumcision, became a full son of Abraham—assuming, not merely the privileges, but the sacrifices and obligations of his tribe. In this manner, "Him who knew no sin," he (God) "hath made sin for us, that we might be made the justice of God in him (2 Cor. v, 21).

We, too, have made a compact or covenant, with God, in Baptism. He is ever true to His promise. Are we true to ours? Let us not forget that to secure our privileges and claims, as sons of God and "heirs to the promise," we must fulfill our duties as sons and

heirs. When our Lord saw Nathaniel for the first time He exclaimed, "This is a true Israelite in whom there is no guile." Could He say the same of us, who, through the portals of Baptism, have entered into the Church, the new Israel of God? Do we keep our covenant, *i. e.*, the promise made by us when we received the name and tribal-mark of the children of God?

II. Again, many place the origin of the rite of Circumcision in the dedication of the person to one's God by a sort of sacrificial act; and such it ever undoubtedly was amongst the Jews. It was expressly enjoined on Abraham, and "his seed after him," as a "sign of the covenant between me and you" (Gen. xvii, 10). A part of the body was offered for the whole, a few drops of infant blood were shed in place of the whole stream of life. The rite thus became a dedicatory sacrifice and consecration to God. Hence, it was essential to the rite that blood should flow, blood being deemed not merely a symbol, but the very seat of life. "Without the shedding of blood," says St. Paul, "there is no remission" (Heb. iv, 22).

Outward public acts of worship have ever assumed the form of sacrifices, implying the offering to God of gifts. There have been always an altar and a priesthood, both necessarily entailing sacrifice. Even in a state of innocence some form of sacrifice would seem a necessary element of religion; but from the entry of sin sacrifice acquired a new phase—that of atonement—a sin-offering. Guilt and punishment meet in every act of sin. Hence, the victim offered in sacrifice had to suffer—be slain in most cases. Human sacrifices were offered, but animals were substituted to recognize God's supreme dominion over life and death and appease His wrath roused by sin. The abuse of sacrifice only accentuates its importance and necessity in the world of religion.

Circumcision, therefore, was the remnant of a felt need of the justice of the sinner's death in sacrifice for sin. It was a symbol of, and preparation for, the great atoning sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, still perpetuated in the Mass. The Victim offered on Calvary, human and divine at the same time, was the sole act of sacrifice adequate to man's sin and God's outraged justice. Christ took upon Himself both the guilt and penalty of our sins. The shedding of His precious Blood, "without which there is no remission," began to-day in the rite of Circumcision. It was an earnest and foreshadowing of Calvary. Accepting the symbolic law of Circumcision,

He accepted also the law of retribution and atonement, of which that sanguinary rite was the expression and foretaste. "I testify to every man that circumciseth himself, that he is a debtor to the whole law" (Gal. v, 3). The yoke of the law, lying heavy on Him, is the price of our ransom.

The outpouring of the precious Blood began in the rite recorded to-day, is carried on, mystically and purely, in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. For we, too, as St. Paul says, like the Jewish, and all other forms of religion, "have an altar, where they have no power to eat, who serve the tabernacle." "Every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices" (Heb. v, 1). Our high priest, Christ, "a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech," still offers daily, through the priests of the new law, the unbloody sacrifice of His Body and Blood, under the very elements of bread and wine, as did the patriarch of old (Gen. xiv, 18). The Blood first shed in the sacrificial rite of circumcision is still mystically offered in this "new oblation" for the quick and the dead. Amongst enlightened nations all other forms of sacrifice have perished—all bloody rites and slaughterings are done away with, or rather they survive mystically, meet, and are expressed in this *clean* oblation. What was good and true and beautiful in them survives in the worldwide Sacrifice of the "Holy Mass."

III. Lastly, the rite of Circumcision is ascribed by some to hygienic motives. To it they attribute the health, vigor and fertility of the Jews, and their comparative immunity from many forms of disease. Whatsoever element of truth there may be in this opinion, it is unquestionable that both liturgically and symbolically circumcision is a sign of purity of heart, cleanliness of life and of immunity from sin. It is a mystical cutting away of the seat of spiritual disease. The original covenant with Abraham acted as a saving, healing and restraining influence on carnal affections and excesses. Then, as now, alas! the sources of natural life were turned into a poisoned fountain of spiritual death. But, happily, the first blood-letting of our infant Saviour, brought to mind to-day, began those life-giving sacramental streams in which the lepers are cleansed. If, at present, there is a "fountain of clean water set up in the new Jerusalem for the washing of the sinners and the unclean," we owe it to the Blood of the Lamb, that was slain to make intercession for us, "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold and silver, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of

a lamb, unspotted and undefiled" (I Peter, i, 18). The first bleatings of this tender Lamb were heard in the carrying out of this cruel rite —that He might win for us the streams of living water that are to us the springs of eternal life. For by submitting to this rite Christ covenanted to die that we might live. Through the merits of the precious Blood, the first drops of which were shed to-day, we now, in the laver of Baptism and in the bath of Penance, "draw water with joy from the Saviour's fountains."

But let us remember that we, too, in a manner, hold the "Keys of life and death." Under God we may still impart life. We can take away our own lives, or those of others, both physically and morally. We may commit suicide both in body and in soul. We may poison the wells of life. We may change even the sweetening waters of sacramental life into cisterns of spiritual death. Instead of living to Christ, we may, by sin, and the abuse of sacramental grace, "Crucify again to ourselves the Lord of Glory."

Now, this thought suggests a few of the lessons to be learned from the reflections made to-day. Besides the general one, of attaching supreme value to the soul, to save which Christ shed every drop of His precious Blood, other helpful thoughts spring from the nature of the rite itself. Let me rivet your attention on one, the need, on our part, of mystical or spiritual circumcision. As a carnal rite it is no longer binding. We are in full enjoyment of the liberty "Wherewith Christ has made us free"; but in this very liberty there lurks a danger. We are free only within the limits of God's holy law. The Mosaic law has been abolished solely in its ritual and ceremonial aspect, not in its moral. In this latter respect, its soul, and heart, and spirit, the law abides in its every jot and title. The temple worship, enshrined in the Mosaic law, was but a training and preparation and fitting of the people for the higher worship of God "in spirit and in truth," just as the sacrifice of goats and oxen made way for the "clean oblation" of the Mass now offered, "From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same." An inkling of this pure and higher form of excision was often granted to the seers of the old dispensation. As far back as Deuteronomy (x, 6), we read "Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your hearts, and stiffen your necks no more." Indeed, the words of Jeremias the prophet come home to us to-day as forcibly as when uttered, "All the nations are uncircumcised in the flesh; but all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart" (Jerem. ix, 25).

As far as carnal pleasures and gross material desires are concerned, are we any better to-day than the Jews whom the prophet addressed? To cut away all carnal excesses, and aught that hinders the flight of the soul to God, is the lesson to be taken to heart on to-day's feast. To do so is to make way for the Creator in the soul. The old carnal rite has gone, but the main end in view remains. "Rend your hearts and not your garments." The words of St. Paul are as true and applicable to-day as when the burning question of carnal circumcision well nigh rent the Church in twain. "For it is not he is a Jew that is so outwardly, nor is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew that is one inwardly, and the circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God" (Rom. ii, 28-29). The circumcision enjoined by the gospel is summed up in our Lord's words, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." The pruning-knife is to be applied to the soul, rather than the body. All is to be surrendered and renounced that would cut us off from God. To be in tune and harmony with Him is divine life. All is to be ruthlessly sacrificed that endangers God's presence by grace in the soul, "If thy right eye," even, "cause thee to offend, pluck it out." "If thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off" (Matt. v, 29). This the circumcision that we all so much need to-day—the cutting away the many hurtful so-called needs and wants that stifle the higher life within us. Under their pressure, there is no liberty of spirit, no freedom from carking material cares. The weight of flesh and blood stays the soul's flight.

Cut off, therefore, from the heart all excessive love and undue attachment to money. It is the world's idol, the world's god, to-day. Worship not at its shrine. Nothing chains the soul to earth and its garish fleeting joys more than the worship of the golden calf. We must *use,* not *abuse,* wealth; and whether rich or poor, never forget that the Christian's main end in life is to lay up treasure, not on earth, but in heaven.

Keeping down the love of wealth will profit little, if we do not also restrain the desire of self-indulgence in its many forms—ease, idleness, amusements, sensual pleasure, self-indulgence, carried to excess and unchecked, is ever insatiable, it both degrades and demoralizes. The pruning-knife of self-denial must never be out of our hands, otherwise we run all to wood and leaves. We are planted in Christ, the true vine; and it is only by spiritual circumcision

we can hope to bear fruit. In conclusion, take to heart the words of St. Paul, "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth . . . stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds and putting on the new, him who is renewed unto knowledge according to the image of him that created him where there is neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, bond nor free. But Christ is all in all" (Col. iii, 5, 10, 11).

XII. VIGILS AND FASTS

BY THE REV. FERREOL GIRARDEY, C.SS.R.

"They that fear the Lord will prepare their hearts, and in His sight will sanctify their souls."—Eccli. ii, 20. "Watch ye and pray."—Mark xiv, 38.

SYNOPSIS.—Works of penance a suitable preparation for feasts.

I. Vigils.—(1) Their meaning. How the early Christians spent them; (2) the Vigils of Christmas, Pentecost and Easter; (3) why the ancient discipline of the Church was changed in the observance of the vigils; (4) how the vigils are observed in the United States.

II. Fasting.—(1) The necessity of penance; (2) why the Church prescribes fasting; (3) how fasting benefited Ninive; (4) which days of the week the early Christians devoted to fasting; (5) the fast of Saturday during the Middle Ages; (6) the Ember days; (7) the fast of the Ember days in connection with the ordinations; (8) the feast of St. Mark and the Rogation days; (9) the obligation of fasting and its merit; (10) conclusion.

How great and magnificent the preparations that worldings make in order to celebrate some grand feast, to commemorate a glorious event! Neither labor nor expense is spared to insure success. Our holy Mother, the Church, also has her feasts, commemorating the grandest and most glorious events, and she wishes all her children to take an active part in them, to make all due preparations to celebrate them in a Christian manner. To enable them to do this worthily, she has instituted certain practises, which will form the subject-matter of this sermon. These practises are works of penance, for she knows that penance is inseparable from a Christian life, from a follower of Jesus Christ, who expressly declares: "If any man wishes to be My disciple, let him deny himself" (Matt. xvi, 24); that is, let him do penance. The chief works of penance are prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

I. VIGILS.—1. In the calendar of the feasts of the Church we come across certain days that are called Vigils. These days occur on the eves of the greatest feasts of the Church. Vigil means a day of watching. In the early ages of the Church the Christians were accustomed on those days to assemble in the churches and spend the whole day in fasting, prayer and singing of psalms as a befitting preparation for those feasts. At about three o'clock

in the afternoon they would go home to partake of the only meal of that day, from which flesh-meat and delicacies were excluded. They would return to the churches at sunset to keep watch the whole night, in prayer, pious chants and other appropriate exercises, so as to be well prepared worthily to celebrate the great feast.

2. In this manner was spent the eve of Christmas, and the first Mass, commemorating Christ's birth, was duly begun at midnight. Then the people remained in church to assist at the second Mass, which was celebrated at early dawn. In like manner, the Christians prayed, fasted and watched on the eve of Pentecost, the feast which commemorates the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles and the foundation of the Church by their preaching. But the grandest and most solemn of all the Vigils was that of the eve of Easter Sunday, or Holy Saturday. On the night of Holy Saturday the grandest ceremonies of the ecclesiastical year, all designed as figures of our divine Saviour's glorious Resurrection, were performed in the most solemn manner. They consisted then, as now, principally of the blessing of the new fire, the blessing of the Paschal Candle by the deacon whilst singing the *Exultet,* that hymn so full of meaning, so pathetical, so inspiring with confidence in its enrapturing melody; the chanting of the prophesies, during which the priests gave the final instructions to the catechumens about to be baptized; the solemn blessing of the baptismal fount, and the baptism of the catechumens by immersion therein; and finally the chanting of the Litany, during which the celebrating clergy lay prostrate on the floor of the sanctuary in humble, penitential prayer. These sublime ceremonies lasted until the dawn of Easter Sunday, when the Mass of the Saviour's Resurrection was commenced, during which were resumed the *Gloria in excelsis Deo,* the ringing of the bells and the joyous strains of the *Alleluia,* and the faithful, well prepared by the rigorous Lenten fast and the penitential exercises of the Vigil, received their risen Lord in holy Communion, to them a pledge of a glorious resurrection and eternal life. Well did these fervent Christians appreciate the grand feast of the Saviour's Resurrection, and find therein and in their austere preparation for it reasons for rejoicing with hope and love.

3. But, alas! although the Church, which, as her divine Founder promised, is to last until the end of the world and triumph over all obstacles and persecutions, is holy, and will ever be so, and imparts to mankind the means of becoming holy, nevertheless, the

human element in the Church, that is her own members, her own children, is ever liable to relax in fervor and to abuse the very means of sanctification. This was the case with the Vigils. When the world had become Christian and the bloody persecutions of the first three centuries were already a thing of the past, many Christians, following their passions, forsook the spirit of penance, and the night gatherings on the Vigils became for many, more eager for pleasure than for the exercises of penance, occasions of numerous abuses and even of sinful deeds. Hence the Church found it necessary to suppress all the accustomed practises on the Vigils, with the exception of the fasting and abstinence. Thenceforth the ceremonies prescribed and hitherto performed at night were assigned to the morning of the Vigils, so that nowadays on Holy Saturday morning the Mass of the Resurrection is celebrated with its joyful chants of the *Gloria in excelsis Deo* and the *Alleluias* and the ringing of bells, although the Church is still mourning the Redeemer's death and burial, and the penitential works of fasting and abstinence are still obligatory on the faithful.

4. Owing principally to the changes induced in the manners and customs on account of the progress of material civilization, and to the consequent gradual relaxation of fervor and of the spirit of penance and self-denial among her children, the Church has, in the course of ages, grown more and more lenient in prescribing penitential observances. Wherefore, in the United States, at the present time, only the Vigils of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and All Saints, are to be observed as days of fasting and abstinence. There is, moreover, a special privilege of the Holy Father permitting to workingmen and their families the use of flesh-meat at the principal meal on the Vigils of Pentecost, the Assumption and All Saints. There is neither fasting nor abstinence prescribed for the Vigils of the Epiphany, of the feasts of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of St. John Baptist, of the Holy Apostles and of St. Laurence, martyr. The Vigils of Christmas, Epiphany, Easter and Pentecost are privileged days and take precedence both in the Divine Office and in the Mass over any feast, however great, that may fall on the same day. The other Vigils are not so privileged; but, in case of a feast falling on the same day, they are to be commemorated both in the Divine Office and in the Mass. The Vigils falling on a Sunday are celebrated or commemorated on the foregoing Satur-

day, and the fasting and abstinence, if then prescribed, are to be kept on Saturday. It behooves us to enter into the spirit of the Church, as is becoming good Christians, by devoting a little more time to prayer and performing some acts of mortification on all Vigils, but especially on those that precede the more solemn feasts, so that we may be well prepared to receive the special blessing which God is wont to impart on those feasts.

II. Fasting.—1. In the liturgy of the Church frequent mention is made of fasting. It prescribes a special fast for the reception of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, consisting in a total abstinence from midnight from every kind of food and drink, however insignificant the quantity. But the fasting mentioned in the various prayers of the liturgy consisted originally in the observance of the fasts prescribed by the Church, that is, in making only one meal a day and abstaining from flesh meat. Why should such a precept form a part of the laws and liturgy of the Church? Because our divine Saviour strictly prescribes the doing of penance to all His disciples, saying: "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii, 5). Why should Christ require us to do penance under pain of eternal damnation? Because we are sinners, and it behooves us to repent of our sins and atone for them. Jesus Christ came to save sinners and call them to repentance (Luke v, 32), and founded His Church for the same object. Wherefore we cannot be His disciples, as He says, unless we deny ourselves; that is, unless we do works of penance. The Church, being convinced of this truth, prescribes to us certain works of self-denial, of penance, and in her liturgy beseeches God favorably to regard our works of penance by showing us His mercy and granting us favors, spiritual and temporal. If the Church did not prescribe works of penance, who would ever do penance?

2. The three principal works of penance prescribed by the Church are prayer, fasting and alms-deeds. Although they usually go hand in hand, our present subject is restricted to fasting. The Church, filled with the spirit of Jesus Christ, prescribes fasting to her children for many reasons: as a means of doing penance for the sins they have committed; of keeping from the sins occasioned by indulging too freely in eating and drinking; as a means of averting misfortunes or divine punishments; of obtaining favors from the divine Goodness; of learning how to control our appetite and

mastering our passions; of detaching us from worldly goods and enjoyments frivolous and transitory, and of inducing us to aspire after those that are heavenly, noble, perfect and everlasting. Fasting also gives us opportunities for almsgiving, so that we may give to the poor what we spare by our fasts. Moreover, it wards off numberless diseases caused by over-indulging the appetite, for experience proves that those who grant their appetite everything it craves do not enjoy good health, but are a prey to various diseases, which render them miserable and shorten life. With good reason does the Church sing in one of the Prefaces of the Mass: "Thou, by means of corporal fast, holdest the vices in check, elevatest the mind and impartest strength and rewards." Fasting, therefore, holds our passions in check, raises our mind heavenward, gives us strength to overcome our passions and to avoid sin, and is deserving of endless reward. "Fasting," says St. Leo, "has ever been the nourishment of virtue. Abstinence is the source of chaste thoughts, wise resolves and salutary counsel. By mortification the flesh dies to its concupiscences and the spirit is renewed in virtue."

3. Holy Scripture furnishes us many examples of the power fasting has of atoning for sin and averting God's wrath and punishments from sinners and even from communities. The most memorable is that of Ninive. The crimes of that great city were so heinous as to call for its total destruction. But God, in His mercy, wishing to give its inhabitants the opportunity to appease His just wrath, sent the prophet Jonas to them. He preached to them that on account of their crimes Ninive would be destroyed in forty days. When this threat came to the ears of the king he issued the following procalamation: "Let neither men nor beasts, oxen nor sheep, taste anything; let them not feed nor drink water. And let men and beasts be covered with sackcloth, and cry to the Lord with all their strength, and let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the iniquity that is in their hands. Who can tell, if God will turn and forgive; and will turn away from his fierce anger, and we shall not perish? And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way; and God had mercy with regard to the evil which He had said He would do to them, and He did not" (Jon. iii, 7-10). In like manner, the sinner can always avert God's impending justice by repenting of his sins and doing works of penance.

4. In the early Church, Wednesdays and Fridays were appointed

as days of fasting. Their choice was most appropriate, for Wednesday was then dedicated by the pagans to Mercury, the god of theft and injustice, and Friday was consecrated to Venus, the goddess of carnal love and debauchery; wherefore, fasting on those days was well calculated both to atone for the countless sins of injustice and impurity committed everywhere almost without restraint, and to keep the Christians from indulging in them. Moreover, the Christian religion furnished another powerful motive for choosing those two days of the week as days of penance on account of their relation to the Passion of our divine Saviour. It was Spy-Wednesday, that is, Wednesday in Holy Week, that the Jews perfected their conspiracy to have Jesus Christ put to death; and it was in the same week, on Good Friday, that our divine Redeemer was so cruelly insulted, tormented and crucified for our sins. The early Christians, therefore, very properly did penance by fasting on those two days of every week, to commemorate Christ's Passion and to participate in its fruits.

5. During the Middle Ages the fast of Wednesday was gradually transferred to Saturday, partly in honor of our Lord's burial, and partly out of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and this was the case especially when the Saturday of each week began to be consecrated to her. But when the faith and fervor of the faithful began to relax, the strict fast of Friday and Saturday was changed into a simple abstinence from flesh-meat. And in these latter times the abstinence on Saturdays has been practically dispensed with in almost every country, for the Church is a kind mother, who, so long as the law of God is not at stake, accommodates the burdens and precepts to the circumstances of time and place and to the fervor and dispositions of her children.

6. We now come to the Ember days, which occur at the beginning of each of the four seasons of the year. These days, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, are days of prescribed fasting and abstinence. In this manner the Church consecrates to God each of the four seasons and strives to obtain for her children the divine blessings by means of penitential works. The Ember days of spring occur in the week following the first Sunday of Lent; those of summer in Pentecost week; those of autumn, in the week following the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Sept. 14); and those of winter, in the week following the third Sunday of Advent.

7. Another reason for the special prayers and the fasts of the Ember days is that the liturgy of the Church assigns these days as the regular time for the ordination of her clergy. Anciently, these were commenced on Ember Saturday night, and, as the ceremonies were long and protracted, the Mass of ordination was not over till the Sunday morning. The fast of the Ember days has, therefore, been instituted principally to obtain of God good, holy and zealous priests for His Church. On this point especially depend the honor and welfare of the Church and the salvation of mankind. History proves, beyond all doubt, that a careless and tepid clergy do greater injury to the Church and to the souls of men than a bitter and bloody persecution. Persecution, in its outcome, proves beneficial to the Church and sends heroic martyrs to heaven, but a clergy devoid of holiness and virtue is the scourge of souls and the disgrace of the Church. That she may possess a truly worthy clergy, the Church endeavors to secure God's blessing on the ordinations by prescribing special prayers in her liturgy and the fasting of the Ember days to all the faithful. Wherefore, it behooves every Catholic to enter into the spirit of the Church by faithfully keeping the laws of fasting and abstinence on the prescribed days, by devout and earnest prayer, and moreover, by contributing, each one according to his means, to educate aspirants to the priesthood, and to support missionaries both at home and in foreign lands. This is not a mere counsel, but a duty for which God will hold each one accountable. Pope Leo XIII granted to workingmen and their families the privilege to use flesh-meat at the principal meal on the Wednesdays and Saturdays of the Ember days.

8. Anciently the feast of the Evangelist St. Mark (April 25) and the Rogation days, that is, the three days preceding the feast of the Ascension of our Lord, were penitential days of prayer, fasting and public procession, for the purpose of averting God's wrath and obtaining His blessing, especially on the growing crops. They are now no longer days of fasting or abstinence; but we would do well on those days to attend the public prayers and procession, if they take place in our parish church, and to increase our alms.

9. The obligation of fasting on the days prescribed regards all the faithful between the ages of twenty-one and sixty years, unless they are dispensed by sickness, weak health, hard bodily or mental labor, or on account of their inability to fast without injuring their health or being hindered from duly performing the duties of their

state. The precept of abstinence from flesh-meat concerns all who have attained the age of reason, that is, all over seven years of age, unless they are dispensed by illness or inability to procure sufficient fare. Wilfully, and without sufficient reason, to transgress either precept is a grievous sin. Such transgressors deprive themselves of the spiritual strength requisite to cope with the devil, the world, and their own passions. They, moreover, by their disobedience to the Church, disedify their neighbor, and practically deny that they are disciples of Jesus crucified, since they fail in the spirit of penance, which is the first condition of being His disciple. As to those who, through forgetfulness or mistake, fail to keep some of the prescribed fasts or abstinence, they do not commit any sin, for there is no sin where there is no deliberate wilful transgression of a commandment of God or of a precept of the Church. Nevertheless, every good Catholic feels grieved at any forgetfulness or mistake on his part concerning fasting and abstinence, and tries to make up for it by some act of voluntary penance, as did the pious Knight Joinville, the friend and biographer of King St. Louis. Whilst he was a prisoner of war in Egypt and awaiting his ransom, Joinville was admitted to dine daily with the sultan. One Friday, without thinking of the day, he there partook of some meat. Having discovered his mistake, he was inconsolable, and to punish himself for it, he resolved to fast the whole of the following Lent on bread and water; a resolution which he most religiously kept, although having committed no sin, he was not under any obligation to do so. What great merit do those gain who enter into the spirit of the Church and join the millions and millions of faithful Catholics all over the world on the prescribed days of fasting, prayer and other penitential works! Speaking of the fast of the Ember days in September, St. Leo says: "It behooves that, on certain days, a general fast should be celebrated by all. Devotion is all the more efficacious and holy, when the whole Church is engaged in pious works with one spirit and one soul. Public works of devotion and penance are preferable to those that are private. If the Lord promises that, when two or three shall agree to ask of Him anything whatsoever, it shall be granted to them (Matt. xviii, 19, 20), what can be refused to the many thousands who pray with one mind and one spirit! How precious in the sight of God is the earnestness of all Christians united together for the

same object! Let us then all unite together, and with one and the same good will enter upon this solemn fast."

10. Let us heed these admonitions of that great and holy Pope, and cheerfully obey the precepts of the Church concerning fasting and abstinence. Every time we keep these laws we gain fresh merit and add a new gem to the heavenly crown, which the Lord, the just Judge, will bestow upon us, if we presevere until death in faithfully keeping the precepts of the Church, our Mother, for our divine Saviour has promised it. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Apoc. ii, 10).

XIII. ROGATION DAYS, LITANIES

BY THE REV. JAMES A. GILLIS, A.M.

"In my affliction I called upon the Lord, and I cried to my God: And he heard my voice from his holy temple: and my cry came before him into his ears."—Ps. xvii, 7.

SYNOPSIS.—I. The Rogation days. The antiquity of processions in liturgical services. Early writers referred to. Religious services in the days of persecution. Confined to the Catacombs and unfrequented places—processions held only when the Church enjoyed peace. The origin of procession traced back to the Ritual of Israel. Examples: Josue, vi; II. Kings, vi; III. Kings viii, 1-10. In the New Laws, procession in honor of the Saviour, John xii, 12, 13. Compatibility of liturgical processions. This view founded on national processions and pageantry held in honor of brave and distinguished persons. Rogation processions: their origin; their solemnity. Signal favors obtained through such public and solemn exercises of piety. Rogation also a preparation for the feast of Ascension. The Ascension in its relation to the Nativity as the finale of the mysteries of God in the great scheme of Redemption. How we should prepare for it. II. The Litanies: their origin. The Litany of the Saints the only liturgical one on the occasion of the Rogations, Consecration of Bishops and cemeteries and churches, and ordination of priests; but other litanies authorized by the Church. Litany of the Saints the most ancient, excepting the Kyrie.—Conclusion.

The three days immediately preceding the feast of the Ascension are observed as special days of supplication. The Litany of the Saints is solemnly chanted on each of these days, which are known as Rogation. The name *Rogation* is derived from the Latin word which is equivalent to the Greek *litaneia,* from which we have the English *litany;* for the litany has always been chanted in the processions of this solemn triduum and recited by the clergy in the divine office.

Processions are of very ancient origin. Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. John Chrysostom and other early writers of the Church make allusion to such processions being held as early as the first century of Christianity, in times of danger and impending calamities. On such occasions both clergy and people marched in procession to the churches, singing psalms and other prayers of supplication. St. Cyprian makes mention of such supplications for the removal of drought, the repelling of enemies, the moderation of, or deliverance from, calamities and the like. Later, in the fourth century, we read

of the pious Emperor Theodosius, preliminary to battle, spending the whole night in fasting and prayer, and, clothed in sackcloth, going with the priests and people in procession to all the churches of the city making devout supplication for the blessing of God upon his arms.

In the early days of persecution the Christians were often obliged, through the fury of the storm that raged around them, to hold their religious ceremonies in the deep recesses of the Catacombs, or to assemble, only one or two at a time, in some unfrequented spot at the silent hour of the early dawn. But when the dark and gloomy storms of persecution passed away and the sun of peace and gladness burst forth with the advent of Christianity, the faithful marched to the churches in procession with the singing of psalms. Tertullian and other early writers allude to these pious practises of the early Christians.

But processions in connection with liturgical services are much older than the Christian Ritual. They were of use in the Ritual of Israel under the Levitical Law as a most solemn means of imploring the divine clemency in time of danger or public calamity; or, as an outward manifestation of joy and gratitude for divine favors. After the children of Israel, in their long and weary journey to the promised land, had crossed the River Jordan, whose waters were miraculously dried up, affording them a dry roadway to cross over, they came against the high walls of Jericho. And the Lord, whose almighty hand led them out of the bondage of Egypt and who went before them in His chariot of light to guide them in their weary march, promised them that these strong walls would fall flat before them and that Jericho would be delivered into their hands. To obtain this favor God commanded the whole army of Israel to go in solemn procession, before the Ark of the Lord, seven times around the walls of the city. And as the Lord hath promised, at the seventh round the great bulwarks of the city fell to the ground and Jericho was delivered into the hands of Israel (Josue. vi). By order of the pious King David, the Ark of the Lord was carried in procession from Cariathiarim to his own city of David. And all Israel went before the Ark and played with joy on all manner of musical instruments (II Kings vi).

Again, the same Ark of the Covenant was carried in a glorious procession, by order of King Solomon, from where it stood in the city of David to its final resting-place—the Holy of Holies—pre-

pared for it in the innermost court of the holy temple of Jerusalem. The king himself and all the princes of the tribes and the great ones of Israel, as well as the priests and Levites, went before the Ark in this magnificent procession, which was so pleasing to the Lord that the majesty of His presence filled the holy temple in a cloud. "Then all the ancients of Israel, with the princes of the tribes and the heads of the families of the children of Israel were assembled to King Solomon in Jerusalem that they might carry the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, that is, out of Zion. And all the ancients of Israel came, and the priests took up the Ark. And King Solomon and the multitude of Israel that were assembled unto him, went with him before the Ark, and they sacrificed sheep and oxen that could not be counted, or numbered. And the priests brought the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord into its place, into the oracle of the temple, into the holy of holies under the wings of the cherubim. And it came to pass when the priests were come out of the sanctuary that a cloud filled the house of the Lord" (III. Kings viii, 1, 3, 5, 6, 19).

In the New Testament we read how, on the first beautiful Palm Sunday, when Christ entered the holy city, the whole people marched out in joyful procession to meet Him, bearing palm branches in their hands and singing hosannas of praise to the Lord (John xii, 12, 13).

Such processions in the liturgical services of the Church are surely befitting as a profession of faith in the majesty and omnipresence of God. Are we not entirely dependent on Him? Do we not owe Him the homage of our whole being, and therefore external as well as internal worship? We are composite beings composed of body as well as soul. Matter as well as spirit. Are we not, therefore, bound to worship Him externally as corporal creatures, as well as internally as spiritual creatures, and thus to render to Him the homage of our whole being?

The gallant soldier who fights for his king and country and sheds his blood on the field of battle is honored with a procession. His remains, covered with the flag of his country—the flag for which he so bravely fought—are carried in triumph. The people follow in procession, keeping time with the martial airs which sound his requiem, while booming cannon acknowledge his services to a grateful country. Indeed, it is the custom of ages that all who have deserved well of their country, the high and mighty, the warrior,

the statesman—all who are distinguished by honor, by patriotism, by virtue—are honored by processions which sound their praises and show forth their people's admiration and gratitude. So says the inspired author of Ecclesiasticus: "Let us now praise men of renown, and our fathers in their generation, such as have borne rule in their dominions, men of great power, and endowed with their wisdom, showing forth in the prophets the dignity of the prophets. Their bodies are buried in peace, and their name liveth unto generation and generation. Let the people show forth their wisdom and the Church declare their praise" (Eccl. xliv).

If it is, then, befitting that grand and gay processions should proclaim the dignity of kings and potentates, and should voice the bravery and victories of heroes, how much more befitting that processions in the liturgical services of the Church should voice our faith in the omnipresence of God, and proclaim our dependence on Him in all our temporal and spiritual concerns.

The processions of the Rogation days date back to about the middle of the fifth century. Dauphany, a province of France, was visited by a terrible earthquake in the year 459. The country suffered at the same time from failure of the crops and other fearful calamities which so terrorized the people that they believed the whole country to be doomed to destruction. The holy Bishop of Vienne, St. Mamertius, seeing in those dreadful events a visitation of God, ordered a strict fast for the three days preceding the Ascension, and called upon his priests and people to walk in solemn procession to the church, with himself at their head, for each of the three days of the triduum, while the Litany of the Saints was chanted in chorus, supplicating Heaven to avert the impending doom of their city and the province of Dauphany. And, as in Ninive, when its people were moved to repentance by the cry of Jonas, the prophet, the avenging hand of God was withdrawn. The earth devastated by the earthquake assumed its verdant hue, and, as at the beginning, by the fiat of the Almighty, it brought forth plants and herbs and fruit in abundance, so that there was plenty of food for man and beast, and the country of Dauphany and the city of Vienne rejoiced in the bounty of God. So remarkable was the favor of Heaven obtained through those public exercises of piety that the example of the saintly Mamertius was followed by other bishops in their respective dioceses until the devotion of the Rogation days was held all over the kingdom of the Franks.

Thence it spread to Spain, Italy, Germany and ultimately through the whole of Europe. Pope Leo III authorized it for the whole Catholic world, at the same time abolishing the fast and other penitential exercises originally in connection with the devotion. The processions originally held year after year on the triduum of the Ascension in grateful remembrance of the wonderful favor of God shown the people of Dauphany in their deliverance from the fearful calamity which visited, were, as the devotion spread to other countries and became more general, held, as they are to-day, as a profession of faith in the majesty and all-ruling presence of God and to supplicate His divine mercy and grace for all.

These Rogations were also a preparation for the great feast of Ascension. It is customary among all people to make a suitable preparation before the celebration of any great event; and the elaborateness of the preparation and the enthusiasm manifested in it are proportionate to the magnitude and importance of the event. The feast of the Ascension is the finale of the mysterious dealings of God with men in the great scheme of Redemption. It may, indeed, be regarded as the complement of the Resurrection, the one festival unfolding and showing what is hidden in the other, just as the Epiphany, which heralds to the world with more than royal proclamation the Infant Saviour, may be regarded as the complement of Christmas—the day of His obscure nativity in the little city of David.

By His Resurrection the Saviour gave proof of His divinity, and therefore of His sufferings and death, having that efficacy which makes full and condign satisfaction to the offended majesty of God; by His ascension He has given ample testimony, before many witnesses, that He is the risen Saviour. The Ascension, therefore, forms with the Resurrection one united whole in proving the Saviour's divine mission to the world. It, furthermore, brings home to us the consoling fact that we have in Him a Mediator of justice enthroned and pleading for us at the right hand of His Eternal Father. Surely, then, we should make a befitting preparation for so great a festival. Moreover, the thought that we have so powerful a mediator interceding for us at the heavenly throne. and that His ascension is a pledge of His mediation, should give us confidence in offering up our supplications on the solemn triduum of that glorious feast.

The Litany of the Saints is chanted by the clergy and people in

the processions of the Rogation days. The litany is also added to the divine office recited by the clergy on those days. Hence, the name given to the solemnities celebrated. Litanies are a very ancient form of prayers. The Greek word from which we have the English *litany* means an entreaty, corresponding with the Latin word from which we have *Rogation.* Hence, the Rogation days are days of entreaty, or petition to almighty God to obtain His favors; and the litany is the special prayer of petition which is offered up in the processions of those days. The Litany of the Saints, which is the one chanted in those solemn processions, is the only liturgical litany which has place in the public services of the Church on those days, as well as on the occasion of the consecration of cemeteries and churches, the ordination of priests, and the consecration of bishops. It is, therefore, strictly speaking, the only liturgical litany, although the litanies of the Most Holy Name of Jesus and of the Blessed Virgin have long been authorized by the Church to which, in recent years, is added the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Litany of St. Joseph.

Of all the litanies, that of the saints is by far the oldest, if we except the *Kyrie eleison,* which is the primitive form of all litanies. In their original purpose of supplicating the Throne of God, the litanies were connected with fasting and prayer. Consequently, they were not appropriate for Sunday and festival services. Hence, we may conclude why the Rogation on which the litanies were solemnly chanted were held on week-days, and in preparation for the festival of the Ascension.

According to ancient writers, the original form of the litanies consisted in the repetition of the *Kyrie eleison* solemnly chanted. As the centuries passed by additions were being made until about the time of St. Gregory the Great, when, with some subsequent additions approved by the Church, the Litany of the Saints, as now used in the liturgy, was formed. There was an earlier form bearing the name of St. Ambrose. Another, probably of a very primitive form, was composed by St. Mamertius, Bishop of Vienne, on the occasion of the processions instituted by him on the solemn Triduum of the Ascension.

The litany chanted on the Rogation days is called the lesser litany, to distinguish it from the litany of the procession of St. Mark's Day, which is known as the greater litany—sometimes the sevenfold litany. This procession with the litany takes its name

from its having been composed by Pope St. Gregory of seven classes of people: the *clergy, boys, young men, girls, married persons,* and *widows.* Near the close of the sixth century a contagious pestilence raged in the city of Rome. Thousands were carried away by the sweeping sickness. Among them an illustrious victim, Pope Pelagius II. Pope St. Gregory accordingly ordered special prayers of supplication and appointed a procession of extraordinary solemnity of the seven classes among the people. The Litany of the Saints was chanted in appeal to Heaven for deliverance from the pestilential disease. And lo! as the procession advanced the plague disappeared. Heaven was propitiated. An angel was seen on the pinnacle of the Castle of Rome sheathing a bloody sword as a pledge of deliverance from the terrible sickness. In memory of the event the gilt statue of the Archangel Michael was set upon the castle. And the Castle of Rome became the Castle of St. Angelo.

We have seen what remarkable favors have been obtained through liturgical processions. Their efficacy in propitiating Heaven is as notable as the antiquity of their origin; and their origin goes back through the centuries to the grand and impressive ceremonial of Israel, voicing the ordinances of Jehovah. The litany chanted is the beautiful Litany of the Saints, with its intercessory appeals, ascending as sweet incense before the throne of God, as we are reminded in the Book of Revelation (viii, 4). Surely, then, we should make those beautiful devotions with confidence, so that we may exclaim in accents of joy with the Psalmist: "In my affliction I called upon the Lord; and I cried to my God: And he heard my voice from the holy temple; and my cry before Him came into His ears" (Ps. xvii, 7).

XIV. CANDLEMAS

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES.

"And after the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they carried Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord."—St. Luke ii, 22.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—An example in to-day's ceremonies of a great means by which the Church teaches and edifies her children—the Liturgy.

Supreme position of the Liturgy in public worship. This does not exclude "popular devotions"; but the Liturgy should have the first place.

Antiquity of Liturgical Offices; they were the spiritual food of Saints and Martyrs.

We will treat of: (a) The history of this festival. (b) The meaning of its ceremonies. (c) Its moral lessons.

I. History of the Feast. Begins with the Mystery commemorated—the Presentation of Jesus and the Purification of Mary. The Mosaic Law on the matter. The unique circumstances of this event did not escape the Church; hence commemorated at Jerusalem in the first half of the Fourth Century; at Antioch, A. D. 526; at Rome later.

Various titles of the Feast, e. g.: "Meeting of our Lord and His Mother with Holy Simeon"; "Coming of the Son of God into the Temple"; "Purification of the B. V. M."

Blessing of candles is of later introduction—this an instance of "development," in this case devotional, which is a sign of life in the true Church contrasted with the stagnation or retrogression of sects.

II. The Ceremonies. Fulfilment of prophecy brought out in the Liturgy of to-day. Aggeus and the Second Temple. Church rejoices to-day, with Simeon and Anna, at the fulfilment of prophecy. Words of the Introit of the Mass. Epistle (from Malachias). The blessed truth that we have the reality, of which the Jewish religion had only the types, brought out in the Catholic Liturgy, e. g.: In Mass, the Lord truly comes to His Temple: cf. Christmas, and the words of the Angel to the shepherds.

Blessing of the Candles. Key to the ceremony in the Nunc Dimittis—the idea that Christ is the Light of the World. Secondary idea, in Procession, of the faithful with loins girt and lamps in their hands. Also the joy of the Church coming to meet her Lord (Antiphon for Procession quoted). Candles blessed for home use, as well as church use. Sacramentals and their efficacy. The prayers used in the Blessing of the Candles aptly express the symbolism of the ceremony.

III. Lessons of the Feast. Lessons already suggested, viz., Gratitude for Catholic privileges; Christ the Light of Men; Share in Light and Warmth of Charity as Members of Christ's Mystical Body.

Lessons from the events commemorated. From the Holy Family to-day we learn obedience, humility, love of poverty. From the unheeding people, and the faithful Simeon and Anna, we learn the danger of not heeding God's inspiration, and of neglect of Sacraments, instructions, etc. The day of death, when Christ will come to each of us, must find us ready; and thus we shall be able to sing our Nunc Dimittis.

In the ceremonies of to-day's festival, dear brethren, in Jesus Christ, we have a truly instructive example of the Church's use of

one of her most effective means of teaching us the great truths of salvation and building us up in true Christian spirituality. I refer to the Church's wonderful and beautiful liturgy.

It is a regrettable fact that in our times the liturgical offices of the Church are neither so generally frequented nor so well understood by the laity as in former ages. I would not be understood to belittle for a moment those forms of approved public devotion that the Church has authorized when I say that it is to be regretted that the grand heritage of liturgical observance does not everywhere hold that place of honor which, according to the mind of the Church herself, it ought to hold. The decrees of authority, and the constant practise of the Church Catholic, make it evident that the Liturgy should hold the first place in our love and esteem, whilst popular devotions should be regarded as a useful accessory, meeting, indeed, a need of many souls in these days, but not intended to thrust into the background those solemn, touching, and informing rites and ceremonies designated by the name "liturgical."

It is not possible, indeed, in the stress and hurry of modern life, to reproduce that state of things which obtained in more leisured times, when the Catholic laity would assist Sunday by Sunday, on all feasts, and even day by day, at the full round of liturgical celebrations in great cathedrals or in the collegiate and parish churches of Christendom; yet there are times when we may solemnly assert, as it were, the supreme position of the liturgical offices of the Church as the highest standard of public worship, by our devout and intelligent assistance at certain special ecclesiastical functions in which the peculiar efficacy of these holy observances for worship and edification is specially brought out.

Nothing but good for the spiritual life of the Church at large can result from a revived love and enthusiasm for her solemn offices. It is for this reason that a thoughtful Catholic would wish to see the solemn celebration of High Mass more numerously attended; for in this we have the greatest liturgical act of the Church's worship. There are also certain days and seasons when the Church shows special care in teaching her children by means of ancient, solemn and inexpressibly touching and beautiful ceremonies. One of these occasions is the Festival of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or Candlemas, as it is familiarly termed in English-speaking countries. Since, as I have intimated, an *intelligent* assistance at the liturgical offices is necessary if we are to derive from them all

the spiritual advantage that they can give, I propose to explain to you to-day the meaning of the ceremonies of Candlemas, that you may follow them to good and beneficial purpose.

It is helpful to grasp the fact that very many, in fact the greater number, of the solemn offices of the Church, date from a period of remote antiquity, coming down to us from primitive Christian ages. We cannot but be moved to greater devotion when we remember that the consecrated words, the expressive actions, the sacred symbols which minister to-day to our own religious emotions, reaching the soul by way of the outward senses, ministered in like manner to the devotion of great saints of old, spoke to our ancestors in the faith of Him whose living image has always remained impressed upon the mind of the Church that He purchased with His Blood, told the martyrs of the glory that awaited them in the heavenly country after their sharp conflict should be over, inculcated upon the first Christian people the truths of faith, and impressed upon the whole Catholic community throughout the world that special *ethos* or character which ever since has marked out unmistakably and ever will mark out and distinguish from all others the true child of God's family, the Church. It will not be amiss, therefore, if I begin by giving you a brief account of the history of this feast of the Purification of our blessed Lady. In the second place, I will explain the meaning of the special ceremonies of the day; and, lastly, I will point out some of those moral lessons which, next to the glory given to God by solemn acts of worship, are the object of this and every other liturgical celebration.

History of the Feast.—The history of this festival naturally begins with that great mystery in the life of our blessed Lord, and of His holy Mother, which we commemorate on Candlemas Day—the presentation of her first-born Son by Mary in the Temple, and her own submission to those legal rites of purification after child-birth. Both these religious observances were demanded by the Mosaic Law. For seven days after child-birth a mother who had brought forth a male child was considered unclean, and for thirty-three days more she was excluded from the sanctuary. At the end of this time she was bound to present herself at the house of God and there to offer up a lamb as a holocaust, and a turtle-dove as a sin-offering; though, if she were poor, another dove might be substituted for the lamb. By another law every first-born son belonged to the Lord, and had to be redeemed by an offering of money. After the requisite offer-

ings had been made and the first-born redeemed, the priest prayed for the woman, and her legal impurity was cleansed away.

The person of Jesus Christ and of His blessed ever-Virgin Mother, gave to Mary's purification and the presentation of Her Son in the Temple a unique character and moral significance that were to form part of the great scheme of man's salvation. This fact did not escape the devout notice of the early Church, and we have evidence that the double event that we celebrate on this festival was already the established object of solemn commemoration in the Church at Jerusalem by the first half of the fourth century. [The evidence is that of the pilgrim of Bordeaux, Egeria or Sylvia. See Art. "Candlemas" in the "Catholic Encyclopedia."]

From Jerusalem the feast spread over the entire Church. It existed in Antioch in the year 526, and was introduced throughout the East in 542. The exact date of its adoption in Rome and in the western portion of the Church is not known. This festival had at first various titles in different parts of the Church, according to the different aspects of the commemorated mystery which presented themselves most prominently to the pious meditations of the faithful in various countries. Thus, in the Greek portion of the Church, it was known as the feast of the Meeting of Our Lord and His Mother with holy Simeon. Elsewhere it was called "the coming of the Son of God into the Temple," and also the "Presentation of the Lord in the Temple," a name which is retained in the Western Church to designate the corresponding mystery of the Holy Rosary. At Rome and in the West the feast was styled "the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary," the name by which it is familiar to ourselves.

The blessing of the candles, which forms now so prominent a feature in the day's celebrations, was of late introduction, not being known earlier than the eleventh century. We have, in the introduction of this beautiful and instructive ceremony, as, indeed, in the whole history of this and other feasts of the Church, an instance of that development along the lines of tradition which, in strong contrast to the dead stagnation or the retrogression of schismatical and heretical bodies, gives evidence of the energetic life pulsating within the true Church—a development which, while ardently progressive, is yet ever faithful to its origin in the body of truth delivered once for all by Jesus Christ and His Apostles to the Church, bringing forth from that divine Treasury things old and new, and

seeking fresh modes of presenting to the faithful the ancient truth that is unchangeable in itself.

THE CEREMONY OF THE FEAST.—We will now glance at the sacred rites and ceremonies of the festival that we are considering, that we may appreciate their beauty and learn the lessons that they teach.

On this Feast of the Purification we celebrate the day when more than one prophecy uttered by the seers of old was fulfilled. Aggeus the prophet had sung "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, yet a little while and I will move the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will move all nations, and the Desired of all nations shall come; and I will fill this House with glory. Great shall be the glory of this House, more than of the first, and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Agg. ii, 5, 7, 8, 10).

The prophet spoke of the Temple that, through his own exhortations, was brought to completion after the Babylonish captivity, and he had been commissioned by God to declare that, although it could not compete with the original Temple of Solomon in outward glory and beauty, yet, by the coming of its Lord and Master, the Messias, the Desired of all nations, it should be honored far above its predecessor. Few, indeed, who saw holy Joseph and the lowly Mother carrying her child on the day when they came to fulfil the law, to offer their humble gifts and to present the Child to the Lord—few, I say, then knew that the prophet's word was now fulfilled, that the Lord in truth had come to His Temple, and that the glory of God, invisible but to God's angels and to the vision of faith, was now filling that highly favored House.

Holy Simeon knew, and the holy Anna knew; and the Church on this day looks back with rejoicing and with gratitude to that moment of moments when Jesus, who came to fulfil that old Law which was but the shadow of the good things to come which we enjoy, entered into possession of His Temple and thus inaugurated that work of fulfilment whose fruits are the possession not now of one chosen nation, but of all the nations of the earth. Thus, in this spirit of joy and thanksgiving, she sings in the Introit and also in the Gradual of to-day's Mass, "We have received thy mercy, O God, in the midst of thy temple: according to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of justice. Great is the Lord, and exceedingly to be praised: in the City of our God, in his holy Mountain."

In the Epistle, the Church recites the prophecy of Malachi, also fulfilled on this day: "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I send my angel, and he shall prepare the way before my face. And presently the Lord whom you seek, and the Angel of the Testament whom you desire, shall come to his Temple."

And in the closing words of the Epistle she takes up that prophecy which under our very eyes is fulfilled in the Holy Sacrifice about to be offered, "The Sacrifice of Juda and Jerusalem"—the spiritual Jerusalem, God's Holy Church—"shall please the Lord, as in the days of old, and in the ancient years, saith the Lord Almighty." One of the chief objects of the Church, my dear brethren, in her selection of passages of Holy Scripture and of the words of holy writers for use in the Liturgy, is to impress upon us the great and blessed truth at which I have just hinted—the truth that what to the Jews was prophesied and in the Jewish religion was foreshadowed, is for us fulfilled, and in our holy religion actualized and made a living fact. Was it foretold that the Lord of Hosts should come to His Temple—He came, indeed, and the priests of that Temple would have none of Him. But to-day, every day He comes to His Temple—to-day and every day, heralded by the silver tones of the Mass bell, the Lord Incarnate is in our midst in the reality of His incarnate Godhead. A little while ago, on the Holy Feast of Christmas, she took up the words of the angel to the watching shepherds, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy—for this day is born unto you a Saviour, in Bethlehem, the city of David." Those words, also, are daily fulfilled in the Holy Mass, when at the sacred words of consecration, Jesus is, as it were, born again to us, and, as once He veiled His Godhead beneath the Sacred Humanity, so now each day He veils Himself, God and Man, beneath the sacramental species.

Time will not permit me to follow, step by step, the various parts of the Mass proper to this festival, in which the lessons of the day are so beautifully and so forcibly brought out. I must be content to have suggested enough to you, as I hope, to send you to the Liturgy itself to explore its devotional treasures. But I must say a few words concerning the ceremony of the Blessing of the Candles and Procession, which have become the distinctive feature of the celebrations of this day.

The key of the liturgical signification of the blessing and carrying in procession of the Candles to-day may be found in the *Nunc*

Dimittis, or Song of Simeon, which is sung during the distribution of the blessed candles to the people; and especially in the repetition of the words, "A light to the enlightening of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people, Israel," which are sung as an antiphon after each verse of the Canticle.

Our blessed Lord is brought before us as the Light of the world, shining in the darkness of heathendom and the shadows of Judaism, the true Light "that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world," shining in every soul, and pointing the way of salvation. According to some commentators on the Liturgy, the wax, of which the candles are made, represents the Flesh of Jesus Christ, formed of the substance of His ever-Virgin Mother, since in old times the bee was looked upon as an emblem of virginity: the wick represents the Blessed Soul of Christ, the burning flame His Divinity. As we ourselves carry the lighted candles in procession, we cannot but recall the exhortation of our blessed Lord, "Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands: and you yourselves like men who wait for their Lord" (St. Luke xii, 35, 36).

The joy, also, of the Church coming forth to meet Her Lord who comes to His Temple, is admirably expressed in this dignified ceremony, a joy that she gives expression to in the antiphon sung at the commencement of the procession: "Adorn thy bride-chamber, O Sion, and receive Christ, thy King: salute Mary, the Gate of Heaven; for she beareth the King of Glory, who is the new Light. The Virgin stands, bringing in her hands her Son, Him who was begotten before the day-star; whom Simeon, receiving into his arms, declared him to the people as the Lord of life and death, and the Saviour of the world."

We should not forget that the candles blessed to-day are not only blessed for ecclesiastical use in church, but also for the private use of the faithful in their homes. By virtue of the official prayers of God's Holy Church, they draw down special blessings upon those who use them with piety and reverence. They are amongst the number of the sacramentals, all of which have a special efficacy from the fact that, when we use them devoutly, our action is joined with the prayers of the whole Christian family, represented by the Church, who consecrated them to holy uses, and prayed for the special blessings attached to each of them. Such prayers of the Church, solemnly offered in her capacity as mystical Body of Christ, and united with Him, cannot fail of their effect unless by the care-

lessness of those who negligently omit to unite themselves with her in their use of the sacramentals. It is a mark of true piety and loyal Catholicism to make frequent and pious use of sacramentals, and an exceeding reverence for these things has always been one of the characteristics of God's saints. In some places the faithful still keep up the pious custom of bringing wax candles to be blessed on this day together with those that are blessed for use in the church, and it is greatly to be wished that this practise obtained everywhere.

The five prayers used by the Church in the blessing of the candles are well worthy of study; for they express most aptly and completely both the religious symbolism of the candles and the special blessings that they bring down from heaven upon those who use them with devotion.

In the first prayer the Church asks that God will "vouchsafe to bless and sanctify these candles, for the service of men, and for the good of their bodies and souls in all places, whether on sea or land"; in the second their religious meaning is brought out in the prayer, that by offering them to God "we may be inflamed by the fire of thy sweet love and made worthy to be presented in the holy temple of thy glory." In the third, she prays that "as these candles, by their visible light, dispel the darkness of the night, so our hearts, burning with invisible fire, and enlightened by the grace of the Holy Ghost, may be delivered from the blindness of sin," and "that after having finished the darksome passage of this life, we may come to never-fading joys." [NOTE.—For the history and interpretation of the ceremonies of Candlemas, I am chiefly indebted to the "Catholic Encyclopedia," the "Catholic Dictionary" (London), and Dom Guéranger's "Liturgical Year."]

LESSONS OF THE FEAST.—From what has been said already in exposition of the ceremonies of Candlemas, you will already have found many lessons suggested to your minds. The lesson of gratitude for the blessings we enjoy in the Holy Catholic Church, wherein are not only beautiful ceremonies and symbols of things divine, but the very realities themselves—grace, spiritual light, and the very presence of Jesus, Author of Light and Grace.

It has been recalled to you that He is the Light of the world, without whom all is spiritually dark: how, through the Church, His own Mystical Body pulsates the light and life and warmth of charity of which He is the living and burning source.

We will now, in conclusion, look more closely at the actual

events of the day we are commemorating, that we may find some practical lesson upon which to mold our individual conduct.

Let us glance at the Persons concerned in the scenes of this holy day. First, the Holy Family, coming in the spirit of obedience to God's Law to fulfil their appointed dues. That act of obedience is the more perfect, because it was not demanded by the condition either of Mary or of Jesus. It was performed for an example to us. Mary, all-pure, neither herself had fallen under the original curse, nor had communicated to her child that stain which rests upon every other child of Adam. She needed, then, no purification—not even that legal purification which was established to emphasize man's inheritance of original sin. Jesus, very God Himself, needed not to be redeemed by the humble offering of the poor, the two doves which his parents brought with them. He was the Lord of all, though a trembling infant. Obedience, humility, a contented and high-souled poverty—these are the virtues that are set before us to-day by Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

About the Temple courts are many worshipers—there are priests and Levites and God's chosen people. Yet, when the Lord came to His Temple, they knew him not. He has a temple that He has made for Himself, in which He wishes to dwell. "Know you not," says St. Paul, "that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in you?" How often have we driven that divine inhabitant from the temple of our hearts! How often have we turned a deaf ear to the whispers of divine grace uttered by Him within us!

And when the Son of God would have come Himself, in Holy Communion, to visit us with His salvation, how often have we refused! And in these things we cannot plead the ignorance of those who stood by unheeding when the long-expected came to His own, and His own received Him not.

Two there were in the Temple who, by faithfulness to grace, merited to be enlightened by the spirit of God, and to recognize their Lord—Holy Simeon and Anna. They, contrasted with the multitude who knew not their Messias, teach us the danger of neglecting God's holy inspirations: the danger of neglecting prayer, and the instructions given to us in God's Holy Church. A day will come when the Lord will come to us, will come to judge us at the moment of death. Let us learn from Simeon and Anna to be ever waiting, ever expectant, ever ready, that the "day of His

coming" may be to us, as it was to them, a day of joy, of light and of peace, so that we may say with confidence in that day, "Lord, now dost thou dismiss thy servant in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have beheld thy salvation which thou hast prepared" (St. Luke ii, 29, 58).

XV. EMBER DAYS

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

"Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Juda joy and gladness and great solemnities."—*Zach.* viii, 19.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Necessity and utility of fasting already treated of. To-day we speak of Ember Days. This name a corruption of Quatuor Tempora, sometimes called the Three Times.

II. History of Ember Days: (a) Probably the Christianizing of a heathen custom. Wisdom of the Church in doing this. The Agricultural Deities of Rome. Men led into the right path by institution of Ember Days. (b) Ember Days also a survival of the sanctification of Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday; teaching the truth that all our time belongs to God. (c) Not unlikely that the Jewish practice, mentioned in the text, had its influence upon the institution of Ember Days. From history of Ember Days we learn something of liturgical and devotional development springing out of the deposit of Divine Truth.

III. Special intentions of Church in instituting the Ember Days: (a) To consecrate the four seasons of the year; to draw a blessing on the crops; to thank God for their safe harvesting, thus teaching the lesson of dependence upon God for our daily food. Connection with this fact of (1) Abstinence and (2) Almsgiving. (b) Prayer for those to be ordained.

Conclusion.—The loss incurred by neglect or forgetfulness of these holy observances. In them, the Church exercises her mediatorial office in union with Jesus Christ, whose priesthood she shares in her corporate capacity.

The Catholic Church, dear brethren in Jesus Christ, from the very beginning of her divinely appointed mission, has ever inculcated upon her children the utility, the necessity and the duty of fasting, as a means of doing penance and subduing the flesh to the spirit. The reasons for this have been explained in a former sermon in this course of instructions, and it is, therefore, unnecessary for me to dwell upon them now. I propose now to treat of four special seasons of fasting and prayer which the Church prescribes during the year, and which we know by the name of Ember Days. This name, once erroneously connected with a kind of cake baked upon hot ashes or embers, is derived with more probability by modern writers from the Latin term "*Quatuor Tempora*," or the "four times" of fasting, of which term "Ember" is a corruption. [See the "Catholic Encyclopedia," Art. *Ember Days.*] In some old writers the Ember Days are

spoken of as the "Three Times"; but this is easily understood by the fact that the great Lenten fast somewhat overshadows the Ember Days which occur at that season of the year.

The history of the Ember Days can be traced very far back in the life of the Church. There is little doubt, indeed, that we have in them an instance of a heathen custom taken over by the Church and Christianized, with that practical wisdom for which she is justly admired, and which knows how to take the elements of good that are to be found in man's natural religious instincts, and to purify them and elevate them to that supernatural order with which she is the medium of communication for men.

The original deities of the Roman people were all connected with agriculture, upon which art men depend for their daily bread. Hence it was the custom in ancient Rome to hold religious services in honor of these gods in June, September and December, and to invoke their protection upon the fruits of the earth. This idea in itself was entirely right and good, though its expression was directed to false deities. By the establishment of the Ember Days the Church recalled men to the right path and taught them to acknowledge the one true God, the Giver of all good; and, particularly, at these four seasons to thank Him for the gifts of nature or to invoke the divine blessing upon the crops; to use God's gifts also in moderation, and by the almsgiving, which the Church has always associated with fasting and prayer, to assist their needy brethren.

We can see, moreover, in the days of the week set apart for the Ember fast, a most interesting survival of the weekly religious observances which obtained in the early Church. From the homilies of St. Leo the Great we know that it was customary to fast and to hold meetings for special prayer every Wednesday and Friday. Further, in accordance with the primitive custom by which the solemn celebration of Holy Mass on festival days was preceded by a vigil of prayer and fasting, we find the Saturday also dedicated to this pious practise in preparation for the festal celebration of the Christian Sabbath, the first day of the week, known as the "Lord's Day." Hence it is that the Ember Days fall on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. [See Duchesne: "Origines du Culte Chrétien," Paris, 1898, pp. 222, 223.] Thus from the earliest times the Church exhibited the salutary tendency to set apart not only the Sunday, but other days for special acts of worship and devotion, teaching us thereby that our religion should be part of our daily lives, and not

put off and on with our Sunday clothes; that, in a word, man owes his whole life and every moment of his time to the service of his Creator.

It is not unlikely that the Jewish practise mentioned in the word of my text also had its influence upon the Church in the establishment of the Ember Days. "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: the fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Juda joy and gladness and great solemnities" (Zach. viii, 19).

Enough has been said, dear brethren, concerning the history of the Ember Days to show you that we have in them a religious observance of which the origin is to be found in those primitive times when the tones of the Master's voice still resounded as not far off, when it was remembered how He had said, "The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them: and then they shall fast in those days" (St. Mark ii, 20). The Church, in fact, began her life with a sacred deposit of divine unalterable truth given into her infallible keeping by Jesus Christ and His Apostles. Almost naturally, we may say, and inevitably, yet also under the supernatural guidance of God's Holy Spirit in the Church, this body of truth, this deposit of divinely revealed teaching, found its expression in various outward acts of devotion. These at first, without doubt, varied in different places, yet all expressed the same truth: it took time, moreover, for the Church to develop her full liturgical and devotional life. At first this development was difficult in face of the relentless persecution that she had to endure, but when peace came at last the work went rapidly forward, and in due time, while still leaving great devotional freedom to the faithful in various times and places, the supreme authority stepped in and imposed certain uniform practises and liturgical rites upon the whole Church. The Ember Days are among these; but the point that I would have you notice is that, although the universal obligation of such observances in some cases did not come till a comparatively late date, the Ember Days themselves, for instance, having been definitely arranged and prescribed for the whole Church by Pope Gregory VII in the eleventh century, yet they have their roots in the far remote past, and in the practises of primitive times, and are the result of a legitimate development of the truth which Jesus Christ and His Holy Apostles taught in the beginning.

We will consider now the special intentions of the Church in the

institution of the Ember Days. They are intended to consecrate to God the four seasons of the year; to implore the Divine blessing upon the fruits of the earth, and thank almighty God for their safe harvesting.

After all, dear brethren, although the complicated conditions of modern life may easily make those forget it who are not employed in the actual cultivation of the soil, it is upon the fruits of the earth that all mankind, civilized or uncivilized, ultimately depend for existence. We forget very easily that the staple food which we find upon our tables every day is there because God has given sun and rain in due season. One of the most obvious ways of acknowledging our dependence upon God for these gifts consists in a due moderation and restriction in their use. I say "obvious," dear brethren, for this mode of acknowledgment naturally suggests itself to the human mind where men have not been sophisticated by the luxuries of modern "civilized" life. It has been shown by modern investigation that the sacred *Tubu,* which exists almost universally amongst savage races, is based upon this idea of the recognition of God as the Giver of all good things by abstinence from this one or that one of His gifts. [See "La Réligion des Primitifs," by Mgr. A. Le Roy, Paris, 1909.]

And is it not common-sense to say that an unlimited and greedy indulgence in luxuries of various kinds implies of itself a spirit of independence and of forgetfulness of the fact that we depend upon God as truly as do the birds of the air and the beasts of the field? It follows, then, that a willing moderation is not only a salutary self-denial, but also an acknowledgment of gratitude due to the Father who provides for our necessities—nay, who showers His gifts upon us in so great abundance?

By giving to the poor what we save by self-denial, we carry out more completely the intentions of the Church in appointing the Ember seasons; for not only is this an act of charity most pleasing to God, but it is also a recognition of that common bond of dependence upon Him which, in fact, unites the whole human race in a solidarity of need as children of one heavenly Father to whom we owe all that we have or are. Thus, speaking in a Homily at the Advent Ember season, St. Leo says: "Fasting has ever been the nourishment of virtue. Abstinence is the source of chaste thoughts, of salutary counsel. By voluntary mortifications the flesh dies to its concupiscences and the spirit is renewed in virtue. *But, since fast-*

ing alone is not sufficient whereby to secure the soul's salvation, let us add to it works of mercy towards the poor. Let us make that which we retrench from indulgence serve unto the exercise of virtue. Let the abstinence of him that fasts become the meal of the poor man."

From very early times the Saturday in the Ember weeks has been set apart by the Church for the ordination of her clergy. The reason is easy to see. The spiritual good of the whole Church, and the salvation of the faithful depend, under God's Providence, to a very great extent upon the zeal and personal holiness of the ministers of the sanctuary. What more urgent object of prayer and fasting, then, than to obtain a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon those who, at the Ember seasons, are about to be consecrated to the solemn and responsible duties of the sacred ministry? Here, therefore, we have another intention of the Church in calling upon her children to set apart these days for fasting and special prayer.

Truly, then, when we consider their venerable origin, their practical embodiment of the great truth of the efficacy and necessity of prayer and self-denial, their salutary influence upon the Christian life, and the blessings that their due observance will most certainly draw down upon the Church, is it not a matter of self-reproach, my dear brethren, that we take so little notice of the Ember Days and of other similar observances which played so great a part in the lives of our forefathers in the faith?

Should we not hold it to be a sacred duty and a high privilege to forward, each in his own sphere, by word and by example, that happy revival of the devotional and liturgical life of the Church which is to be witnessed to-day? It is no slight thing to pass over unnoticed a holy institution like that of the Ember Days; for to these things are attached very special graces and blessings which the Church calls down at such times upon her faithful children. We can scarcely expect those blessings if we dissociate ourselves by our forgetfulness or indifference from those Catholic ordinances which are their ordinary vehicle. There is a sacred virtue in those ordinances; for they are, as it were, the *official* acts, and the *official* pleadings of the Church as appointed intermediary between God and man; exercising her mediation through that priesthood which is on earth the continuation of and participation in the Eternal Priesthood of Jesus Christ Himself, who, indeed, carries on through Church and priest, who are in intimate union and co-operation with Him, His

own mediatorial office. And has not St. John told us in the Apocalypse that we are all—in our corporate capacity, that is, as members of the Church—"a kingdom and priests to God?" It is, then, both a duty and a privilege, a duty not to be neglected, and a privilege not to be despised, to unite ourselves with the Church in those special rites and ceremonies which she has instituted for our common observance as members of Christ's mystical Body.

Lastly, my dear brethren, we must always remember that the outward expressions of piety, of repentance and devotion, these bodily fasts and mortifications, are but a means to an end: that they are meant to aid us in that continual fast and abstinence from all sinful pleasures which is the daily obligation of every Christian, and is not to be confined to any special times or seasons. The interior spirit, then, in which we should follow the Church in these holy observances, the spirit without which they would be vain and useless indeed, is summed up admirably in one of the prayers in the Mass for the Ember Saturday during the season of Pentecost: "Grant, we beseech Thee, almighty God, that, being taught by these salutary fasts, and abstaining likewise from all vices, we may the more easily obtain thy mercy—through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

XVI. THE SEASON OF LENT

I. History, Meaning, Object

BY DOM BERNARD HAYES, O.S.B.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—The promulgation of Lent; what is its meaning and object. The meaning of the word.

I. (a) The Church of God insists upon penance because God demands it. This is shown from:

Old Law.

New Law (St. John the Baptist, Christ, Apostles).

The institution of Lent.

(b) The history of Lent; how men have ever tried to throw off the yoke of penance and how the Church has ever fought to keep it in place.

(c) As the Church disciplines men's bodies by her penitential laws, so also does she train their minds to appreciate, and their wills to accept and apply, penance. This she does by means of her liturgy.

II. The Passion.—To give us still stronger motives for humility and penance the Church during the two last weeks of Lent turns our eyes from our own souls and directs them to the passion of Jesus Christ. We shall be encouraged to endure the passion of regeneration if we realize vividly the passion of Christ. This is set forth in a most living way in the liturgy of Holy Week. This is illustrated by a description of the liturgy of: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday.

III. The influence of the liturgical life on the Christian world in earlier days.

IV.—Conclusion.

Introduction.—In the Mass of Ash Wednesday, my dear brethren, the following words of the prophet Joel are read: "Be converted to Me with all your heart, in fasting, in weeping, and in mourning. . . . Blow the trumpet in Sion, sanctify a fast, gather together the people, sanctify the Church" (Joel ii).

The great fast of Lent has been proclaimed, and the trumpet sounds throughout the Church of God, calling the people to forsake the false joys of earth and to be converted to their God with all their heart. The voice of the trumpet proclaims: "Let fasting take the place of feasting, weeping of mirth, and mourning of joy." What, my brethren, is the object of this season which comes so harshly into the ordinary course of our lives? Whence did it come? Is it necessary for us now, or is it cherished merely as an interesting historical survival? We have a right, my brethren, to be satisfied on these points; for Lent makes large demands upon your gen-

erosity; and when we must put ourselves to grave inconvenience, we all like to know that it is for good reasons.

I propose, therefore, my brethren, to explain this season of Lent, to show its object, and to prove its necessity.

We get the word "Lent" from the old Anglo-Saxon language; Lenten-tide meant Spring-time, and "Lent" the Spring fast. In Latin this season is called "Quadragesima," which means "fortieth," and expresses the number of the days of the fast. This number recalls to our minds that Jesus Christ was led by the spirit into the desert and fasted forty days and forty nights (Matt. iv).

I. (*a*) The Church wishes each of her children, in imitation of Christ, to spend a like period each year in penance and recollection. Her discipline of penance is mainly under the form of fasting. Fasting has been defined as an "abstinence, which man voluntarily imposes upon himself, as an expiation for sin, and which, during Lent, is practised in obedience to the general law of the Church." She insists upon penance, because it is clear from the Scriptures that God demands it, and in choosing this form of it, the Church was not guided merely by natural wisdom, but by the evidence in the Old and New Testaments that this was acceptable to God.

Old Law.—Let us take some examples. In the prophecy of Jonas we read that "the word of the Lord came to Jonas, saying: 'Arise and go to Ninive, the great city, and preach in it the preaching that I bid thee.'" And Jonas arose and, entering into the city, cried: "Yet forty days and Ninive shall be destroyed." And the men of Ninive believed in God: and they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least. . . . And God saw their works that they were turned from their evil way: and God had mercy with regard to the evil which He had said He would do to them, and He did it not" (Jonas iii). In the Book of Deuteronomy we have another striking example of God's wrath being turned aside by penance and prayer. Moses recalls to the memory of the people how, in Horeb, they had provoked God to wrath and would have been destroyed for their idolatry. After having received the commandments upon tables of stone, he came down the mountain and found the people adoring the golden calf. "And I fell down," he says, "before the Lord, forty days and nights, neither eating bread nor drinking water, for all your sins which you had committed against the Lord, and had provoked Him to wrath. . . . And I lay prostrate before the Lord forty days and nights, in which I humbly

besought Him that He would not destroy you as He had threatened" (Deut. ix).

New Law. St. John the Baptist.—Thus throughout the Old Testament we find that when men had sinned they strove to appease the wrath of God by bodily penance and by humble prayer. The same gospel of penance is preached by the second Elias, St. John the Baptist, who preceded the first coming of the Son of God upon earth, as Elias himself is to come "to restore all things" before Jesus Christ comes to judge the world. We read in St. Mark's gospel that: "John was in the desert, baptising and preaching the baptism of penance unto remission of sins" (Mark i, 4). He spoke to the multitudes in strong words; he did not suit his words to the degenerate views of his day. "Ye offspring of vipers," he cried, "who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruits worthy of penance" (Luke iii).

Christ, Apostles.—Is it surprising then, my brethren, that the first public lesson given to men by our Saviour Himself is the lesson of penance? Nay, should not we be surprised if He, who had sent as His herald one "clothed with a garment of camel's hair, and whose food was locusts and wild honey," had lived a life in which penance found no place? Therefore, after His baptism by St. John in the Jordan, He withdrew into the desert wastes and for "forty days and forty nights" He tasted neither food nor drink. The years of His public life also were filled with penitential labors. All the day He worked for His people and the nights He spent in prayer. His lot in life could have been so different; but He *chose* suffering as his portion, as St. Paul testifies: "Having joy set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame" (Heb. xii, 2). His test of a true follower is: "Can you drink of the chalice that I shall drink?" (Matt. xx, 22).

Once when our Lord had foretold His approaching passion, St. Peter said: "Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee." Who, turning to Peter, said: "Go behind Me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto Me: because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men." Then Jesus said to His disciples: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matt. xvi, 22). On another occasion Christ said: "Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii, 3). Not only did our divine Lord insist upon penance in general, but He wished that particular form

of penance, known as "fasting," to be practised under the New Law: "The days will come," He said, "when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast" (Matt. ix, 14). Such was the teaching and example of Christ. What, my dear brethren, was the result? When the Apostles went forth to win the pagan world, to convert it to Christ, they preached salvation through penance. St. Paul told the Corinthians that the message he brought from God to men was an unpopular one: "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the gentiles foolishness" (I. Cor. i, 23). St. Peter, in his first epistle, wrote: "Christ, having suffered in the flesh, be ye armed with the same thought: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sins" (I. Pet. iv, 1).

(*b*) *Institution of Lent.*—Many of the great Fathers and Doctors of the Church say that the Apostles decreed that the great solemnity of Easter should be preceded by a universal fast; and that, in remembrance of Christ's forty-days' fast in the desert, they instituted Lent. To begin with, there was no uniform way of observing it. But the faithful for forty days gave themselves to fasting and prayer in imitation of their Master. In the beginning, the Christians adopted the same customs of fasting as were prescribed in the Old Law, by which one meal only was allowed on fasting days, and that after sunset. This rule seems to have been strictly observed, and for the first eight centuries the one meal allowed was taken after Vespers. Moreover, abstinence from flesh meat was everywhere looked on as essential to fasting, and for many centuries even eggs and milk-meats were not allowed. In the ninth century we notice relaxations appearing in the ancient discipline. The one meal began to be taken at three o'clock in the afternoon, the hour of None, instead of after Vespers. In the tenth century this has become universal and has been allowed, but the hour of vespers is now also earlier and is still before the meal. At the close of the thirteenth century vespers and the fasting meal were at midday. When the repast was taken so early, it is not surprising to find that a "collation" was found necessary in the evening. The use of this word comes from the Rule of St. Benedict. There we find a distinction made between the fasts of the Church and the fasts of the Rule: On days of monastic fast the dinner was at three o'clock, the hour of None, instead of after Vespers. In the summer and autumn months, when the work in the fields was heavy and the heat fatiguing, the

abbot was allowed to give to the monks a small measure of wine before Compline, during the reading of the "Conferences of Cassian." Now the Latin word for "Conference" is "Collatio"; and from this name the evening refreshment on fasting days came to be called "Collation." After the ninth century the use of meat during Lent began; at first only milk-meats, in the northern countries. Councils and Popes ever strove to keep the old austerity, but dispensations became necessary; dispensations became general customs, and customs were tacitly sanctioned, until in the seventeenth century the use of these meats seems to have become universal. Since the so-called reformation, the history of the Church has been one long fight against laxity and self-indulgence. Even amongst those of the household of the faith, how little reverence remains for this holy season, and how little of the spirit of penance! We Catholics, my brethren, must not be influenced by the spirit of the world; it is our high vocation to be as a leaven of righteousness amongst men. We must set the example to a self-indulgent world of that penitential spirit which is the mark of the followers of Christ. Although the history of Lent seems to be one of gradual relaxation, yet we must never forget that there is an unwritten history of strict observance and of generous self-denial. The relaxations were no revolt against the Cross, as was the case with Luther and his agents, who rejected all ancient discipline and gave men freedom for their inclinations. But as the rising tide, inch by inch, possesses itself of the whole beach, so the waves of luxury have ever risen higher and ever extended their conquests, till it seems as if they will engulf what little remains of the spirit of Christian self-denial. Can we then, my brethren, do without the barriers which the Church opposes to the advancing tide? No, my brethren, we cannot! If we wish to keep alive in this corrupt world the true spirit of Jesus Christ, we must return to the simplicity and strictness of earlier days. The example of our forefathers, whose noble inheritance we now possess, must make us loyal to the Church's laws of penance.

(*c*) True penance, my brethren, does not consist merely in mortification of the body, but in that of the soul also. Sin is committed by the will, and therefore it is just that the will as well as the body should make atonement. Before bodily penance can be of any avail for sanctification, it must be accepted by the will. The effects of the lash upon a criminal is very different from those of a saint's discipline. The former subdues the body, but makes the will rise in

revolt, whilst the latter brings both body and soul to the feet of God. The Church, therefore, aims not only at subduing men's bodies by her penitential laws, but she strives to fill their souls with the spirit of penance. This she does by means of her liturgy. She opens this holy season by sprinkling ashes upon the heads of the faithful. As Job sprinkled his flesh with ashes, and as King David, after sinning grievously, mingled ashes with his bread in order to appease God's anger and indignation, so the Christian recalls his sins and humbles himself before God; he recalls that even though God has forgiven the sin, yet the punishment of sin, death, has yet to be endured. So he bows his head that the ashes may be put upon it, and with humble heart he hears the sentence of death pronounced upon him: "Remember, O man, that thou art dust and unto dust thou shalt return!" Formerly it was the custom to approach barefooted to receive the ashes, and we read of a pope of the twelfth century, surrounded by his cardinals, walking barefooted from the church of St. Anastasia to that of St. Sabina, where the Ash Wednesday ceremony was to be performed. The prayers which are used at the blessing of the ashes and during the Mass of the day, if said with fervor, will fill us with consciousness of sin, with the sense of our weakness and need of God's help, with feelings of humility and with a vivid realization of the imminence of death. Every one, my dear brethren, should have a Missal and carefully follow the beautiful words of the liturgy in order to acquire the sentiments of heart suited to this season.

In order that she may still more impress us, the Church banishes from her services all the pomp by which she loves to honor God, and all signs of joy. The eye sees on every side signs of penance; the ministers in the sanctuary are clad in somber purple; there are no flowers upon the altar. The ear hears no longer the joyous *Alleluia,* or the hymn of the Angels' choir, the *Gloria in excelsis,* or the glad tones of the organ. At the conclusion of the great liturgy of the Mass, the deacon no longer dismisses the people with the words *"Ite, Missa est,"* but he says, *"Benedicamus Domino," "Bless ye the Lord,"* as if to encourage the people to persevere in prayer even when not present at the sacred mysteries.

On the fourth Sunday of Lent, the Church allows a ray of joy to pierce the gloom, in order to encourage her children to persevere. This is called *"Laetare"* Sunday, from the first word of the Introit of the Mass. Flowers appear upon the altar, the organ is once more heard, and rose-colored vestments may be used. The note of joy

and hope sounds through all the words of this day's liturgy. The Sunday ends, and the clouds close over once more, and we are again sitting clothed with sackcloth and ashes, bemoaning our sins and appeasing the anger of our injured God.

II. Up to this point, my brethren, in order to rouse in us sentiments of contrition and humility, the Church has turned our eyes upon our own sinfulness, and upon death the punishment for sin. She has tried to wring from our stony hearts tears of compunction and humiliation by the contemplation of our own misery. She now turns our eyes upon Jesus Christ, the Victim of Sin; she recalls to us in all their details the sufferings He underwent to atone for our sins. During the closing two weeks of Lent, which are known as Passion-tide, the great drama of redemption is set before us as if it were actually happening. By this annual commemoration of the Sacred Passion, she gives to us a higher and purer motive for doing penance for our sins. She would have us "think diligently upon Him who endureth such opposition from sinners against Himself, that we be not wearied, fainting in our minds. For we have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin" (Heb. xii, 2-4). What could make us more ready to run to the fight proposed to us than the example of that Innocent Victim, who came "to reconcile all things unto God, making peace through the blood of the Cross?" (Col. i, 20). By the liturgy of Passion-tide the Church tries to create in us the "same mind as was in the Lord Jesus," so that, as He willed to suffer and die to save us, we on our part may generously undergo that penitential crucifixion of our lower natures which God demands of us before He will receive us. There could be no more vivid meditation on the Sacred Passion than the liturgy of Holy Week. The original tragedy is re-enacted for us and to those who devoutly follow the steps of our suffering Lord, the week is one continuous soul-moving contemplation.

Palm Sunday.—On Palm Sunday we accompany Jesus from Bethania to Jerusalem. We join the shouting throngs which greet Him as the Messias. "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. O, King of Israel! Hosanna in the highest." We take palms in our hands, and with psalm and antiphon accompany Jesus in His triumph and hail Him as the "King of Israel."

The ceremony is divided into three parts. The first is the blessing of the palms, and the prayers used are beautiful and instructive.

The palms are distributed and should be kept by the faithful during the year for a protection to their persons and their dwellings. The second part is the procession. The priest represents Christ, and the palm branches are carried in memory of those which the people bore in their hands and threw down before our Saviour when He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. On the return of the procession you will notice, my brethren, that the church door is locked and the procession cannot enter; voices are heard singing within the church, and those outside take up the refrain. The locked door is a symbol of the gates of heaven shut against sinful men; the voices are those of the angels who greet the Redeemer: "Glory, praise, and honor be to Thee, O Christ, our King, our Saviour!" The door is struck with the cross and opens, representing the opening of heaven to men by the victory of the Cross.

Though this is a day of triumph, yet during the Mass, the third part of the ceremony, the account of the Passion from St. Matthews' gospel is read. This reminds us of the fickleness of the Jews, who will in a few days clamor for their King's life-blood. On Tuesday and Wednesday the Passion is read from the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke.

Maundy Thursday.—On Maundy Thursday all the touching circumstances of the Last Supper and the institution of the Blessed Sacrament are reproduced in a most striking and moving form. To honor the Blessed Sacrament, Mass is celebrated with all possible splendor. The color of the vestments is white, the altar is decorated, and with joyous ringing of bells and with the glad tones of the organ the Angelic Hymn, *Gloria in excelsis,* is sung. When this is finished the bells and the organ are once more silent. The Mass goes on as usual, but we may notice one significant omission: the Kiss of Peace is not given, out of detestation for the crime of Judas who, on this day, profaned this sign of friendship. Throughout the world loving souls will gather round the altar to receive their paschal Communion on this day, making some reparation to Jesus for the treachery of which He was the victim.

Good Friday.—The service of Good Friday is most realistic. During the first part of the service lessons from the prophets are read which refer to the Passion, and then the account of the Passion itself is read from St. John's gospel. Prayers follow, in which the Church, joining herself to Jesus upon the Cross, intercedes for the necessities of the whole world. The Celebrant now takes off his chasuble

and holds aloft the cross for the veneration of the people. Unveiling the upper part of the cross, he sings: "Behold the wood of the Cross, on which hung the salvation of the world." Then both priest and people, kneeling, sing "Come let us adore."

Unveiling the right arm of the cross and raising his voice, the priest once more sings the salutation of the cross and holds it up for the veneration of the faithful; and still a third time is this repeated, when the cross is completely uncovered. The people then advance and kiss the feet of the crucifix, whilst the choir sing the touching "reproaches." On this day so vivid is the remembrance of the sacrifice of Calvary that the Church will not permit the renewal of it by consecration. On Maundy Thursday two Hosts were consecrated, one being consumed by the priest and the second kept at the "altar of repose." To-day the Sacred Host is brought in solemn procession to the High Altar, and during the Mass of the "Presanctified," which has no consecration and differs in many ways from the ordinary Mass, the Host is received by the Celebrant. Vespers follow immediately, and on their completion the altars are stripped and the church is left desolate. In former days the faithful spent Holy Saturday in mourning for their Lord, who lay in the tomb awaiting His resurrection. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was not offered up, not even a Mass of the Presanctified. But since the eleventh century the character of the day has changed: it is the precursor of Easter, and the Mass has come to be considered an anticipation of Sunday and of our Lord's resurrection rather than the sacrifice of Holy Saturday, when His mangled body lay in the tomb. It is therefore a part of the feast of Easter, and its liturgy does not come within the scope of our subject.

It is impossible to speak adequately here of the liturgy of this great week. I have sketched for you, my brethren, in outline only, some of the ceremonies. By devoutly following the liturgy we are united to our suffering Lord, our hard hearts are broken by the dread words of the prophets and of David. We hear Jesus Himself disclosing His anguish of soul, the Church of God denouncing the deicides, the ruin of Jerusalem foretold. We have wounded the Sacred Heart by our Sins, we have crucified our Saviour and we must weep in humility and penance if we would escape the sentence of condemnation.

III. And this, my dear brethren, was the spirit of more fervent days. In earlier times the whole Christian world gave itself up to this spirit

of penance. It was to those ages so full of faith, the "great week," or the "painful week." We read of fervent souls pushing their fasting to the utmost limits of human endurance. We are told that some would fast the whole week, others for two, three, or four consecutive days, and it was the common practise to abstain from food from the evening of Maundy Thursday till Easter Sunday morning. All work was suspended, the people flocked to the churches and followed with loving hearts and tearful eyes each step of their suffering Lord as set forth in the liturgy. The prisons were flung open, slaves were freed, abundant alms were given to the poor, and war and quarrels were forgotten.

What an immense influence upon society the liturgical life of the Church and her penitential discipline must have had. Alas! my brethren, the world has in its foolish pride and self-sufficiency swept aside as "out-of-date" all national customs springing from this active remembrance of the Incarnation. The "Reign of Christ," which was universal at these solemn times, has been abolished. Christ is dethroned and the idol of false "Liberty" is raised up in His place. Men used to do penance for their sins, to weep over the wounds of their Saviour and strengthen themselves against their proud and sensual temptations. Now men withdraw all barriers and allow the flood of human wickedness to devastate the world. What can save modern society, my brethren, except the salutary discipline of penance imposed by the Church, and the humility of heart and remembrance of the Redeemer taught by her liturgy?

IV. Let us, therefore, my dear brethren, be encouraged generously to undergo the salutary penance of this holy season. We shall gain the proper dispositions of soul by keeping close to Jesus Christ, and by living the life of the Church, thinking her thoughts, using her words, and filling our hearts with her sentiments; and these we shall find in her liturgy. If this labor of the purification of the soul is painful, we must remember that "God chastiseth every son that He receiveth," and that we cannot share the glories of His Resurrection unless we follow Him in the days of His penance and His passion.

XVII. THE SEASON OF LENT

II. Ash Wednesday and Laetare Sunday

BY THE REV. J. A. M. GILLIS, A.M.

"And they shall no more hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall upon them, nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to the living fountains of water. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Apoc. vii, 17).

SYNOPSIS.—I. The ceremonies of Ash Wednesday. The liturgical use of ashes in this connection. Reference to the use of ashes in the Ritual of Israel. Examples: Jonas iii, 4-6; Ps. c, 1-10; Job xlii, 6. Twofold signification of the distribution of ashes in connection with religious ceremonies: (a) As a symbol of penance. (b) On account of its cleansing properties ashes significant of moral purification—meaning attached to it in the Rite of the Red Heifer in the Levitical law (Num. xix, 17). Ash Wednesday was first embraced in the quadragesimal time. Period of lenten fast extended to forty days, corresponding with number associated with chastisement and sorrow in Holy Writ. Ceremony of sprinkling the ashes on Ash Wednesday first confined to public sinners; afterwards, as now, open to all the faithful. Manner of obtaining the ashes; its symbolic meaning.

II. Laetare Sunday. Meaning of the festival—sorrow turned into joy. Perseverance in the spiritual combat encouraged by looking back on victories gained. The words of Apocalypse vii, 1, 7.

I. The holy season of Lent opens with a solemn and impressive ceremony which gives Ash Wednesday its name. The people approach and kneel at the altar railing and the priest, after reciting the liturgical prayers of the office, in which pardon and mercy are implored for sinners, and which express in their beautiful signification the blessing of the ashes, puts a portion of the latter on his head and then on the heads of all those present, pronouncing over them the words which first fell from the lips of Jehovah and were spoken to man amidst the gloomy cloud of death which his unhappy fall brought on the fair face of the newly created universe. "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return."

The liturgical use of ashes goes back through the centuries, and in its fundamental conception must be traced to the impressive ceremonial of Israel from which, without doubt, the Christian ritual is borrowed and in which it had its origin. In many passages of the

Old Testament ashes are associated with mourning and sorrow. When Jonas proclaimed on the streets of Ninive that the great city would be destroyed in forty days, the people, trembling with fear at their impending doom, from the king on his royal throne to the peasant toiling in the field, clothed themselves in sackcloth and sat in ashes (Jonas iii, 4-6). The holy king David, when in deepest affliction and sorrow for his sins, mingled ashes with his food, so that even in the midst of enjoyment he might be reminded of his transgression and of the penance due to make satisfaction to the offended majesty of God: "I did eat ashes like bread and mingled my drink with my weeping" (Ps. ci, 10). In like manner Job, in his affliction, sprinkled himself with dust and ashes: "Therefore do I reprehend myself and do penance in dust and ashes" (Job. xlii, 6).

In these and many other passages of the Old Testament the use of ashes is associated with penance and mourning. It may be that originally dust taken from the grave of the dead was sprinkled over the mourner to remind him of his mortality, and thus as a token that only the gate of the tomb stood between him and his kindred dust. Ashes being the symbol of penance, its somber gray being the color of the penitential garb, it is natural that it should be mingled with the dust to show forth sorrow and humiliation in the hour of affliction and in making an appeal for mercy and pardon.

In the ceremonies of the Church ashes alone are of liturgical use either as a symbol of penance and as a token of mortality; or, on account of its cleansing properties, as significant of moral purification, even as the water in baptism signifies the spiritual washing of the soul by the sacramental grace conferred. This signification of the liturgical use of ashes may be referred to the rite of the red heifer spoken of in the book of Numbers, in which the ashes of the victim, when mixed with water, according to the ceremonial of the ritual of Israel, had the efficacy of purifying the unclean: "And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 'This is the observance of the victim which the Lord has ordained. Command the children of Israel that they bring a red cow of full age in which there is no blemish . . . and you shall deliver her to Eleazar, the priest, who shall bring her forth without the camp and shall immolate her . . . and shall burn in the sight of all. . . . And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the cow and shall pour them forth without the camp in a most clean place that they may be reserved for the multitude of the children of Israel and for a water of aspersion;

because the cow was burned for sin. . . . And they shall take of the ashes of the burning and of the sin offering and shall pour living waters upon them into a vessel. . . . And if any man be not expiated after this rite, his soul shall perish out of the midst of the Church; because he hath profaned the Sanctuary of the Lord and was not sprinkled with the water of purification.'" St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, bears testimony to the ceremonial efficacy of this Levitical rite, but refers to it as the figure of the one true sacrifice of the New Law in which the Blood of Christ is offered for sin (Heb. ix, 13-14). The sprinkling of ashes on Ash Wednesday in virtue of its liturgical use purifies from venial sin the subject who is piously disposed, but as in the case of all the sacramentals, its ceremonial efficacy depends upon the disposition of the penitent and not on an inherent virtue which of itself gives grace, as in the case of the Sacraments.

In primitive times Ash Wednesday did not come within the quadragesimal time. The Lent began the first Sunday of Lent, so that the time between that Sunday and Easter, comprising thirty-six days of fast, or one-tenth of the year, was offered as a penitential tithe to God. Afterwards the time was extended to Ash Wednesday, when the number of fast days was increased to forty, which number in Scripture seems to have special reference to chastisement and penance, as fifty, the number of the year of the Jubilee, has reference to joy. The just anger of the offended Deity opened the flood gates of heaven, and let loose the great fountains of the deep, and the waters of the Noachian deluge poured upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, until the earth was cleansed by the destroying waters. When the sins of Ninive rose up to heaven like a cloud of filthy darkness, Jonas, the prophet, voiced the warning of God: "Yet forty days and Ninive will be destroyed."

And for forty days the people of Ninive humbled themselves in fear of their impending doom. For forty days they sat in ashes in the garb of penance, crying to heaven for mercy, until the avenging hand of God was withdrawn and the threatened destruction of the city averted. Moses stayed forty days amidst the cloud of Sinai, and Elias fasted forty days until he came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the Saviour passed forty days fasting in the desert, where he was tempted by the fell enemy of the souls.

As early as the sixth century Lent began, as it begins now, with Ash Wednesday, but the ceremony of sprinkling the ashes was con-

fined at first to public sinners. All those who had the misfortune to soil their robe of innocence by the stain of mortal sin asked for public penance on Ash Wednesday, the first day of the penitential season, in order to recover the grace of reconciliation. Barefooted and in mourning garments, like the Ninivites of old, they appeared in the church; and there, in much sorrow and weeping, they threw themselves at the feet of the Bishop who, deeply moved, invested them with penitential garments and sprinkled ashes upon their heads, and with the clergy said over them the penitential psalms and litanies. Then he exhorted them to penance to appease the anger of God for sin, after which he led them in solemn procession out of the church, addressing them at the same time in the following words: "Behold, you are rejected to-day from the threshold of the Church, your holy Mother, because of your sins and vices as Adam, the first man, was cast out of Paradise because of his transgressions." After these salutary words he again spoke to them from the threshold of the church, exhorting them to have confidence in the divine mercy which drops its refreshing dew upon all who humble themselves in the spirit of penance. All those who complied with those canonical penances were admitted to church membership on Holy Thursday.

In the course of time the public penances were commuted to other pious exercises, but the custom of sprinkling the ashes on Ash Wednesday was retained in the Liturgy of the Church. Through motives of humility, as well as in the spirit of charity and fraternity towards those who were known to be public sinners, many others appeared at the altar railing to receive the ashes on their heads. Finally, in the year 1091, by the council of Beneventum, it was decreed that the ashes were to be distributed to all as a reminder of the necessity of penance, in harmony with the words of Holy Writ: "Unless you do penance you shall all likewise perish."

The ashes blessed on Ash Wednesday and put on the heads of the faithful are obtained by burning the palm branches used in the procession of the Palm Sunday of the previous year. The palm is the emblem of peace. Hence the people of Jerusalem received the Saviour, the Prince of Peace, on his entrance to the holy city, with palm boughs in their hands. The martyrs are represented bearing palm branches to signify that blessed peace and rest which comes after victory. But the palm reduced to ashes can never more recover its beautiful verdure. Nature cannot restore the beauty which

is gone. So the ashes are a reminder that the life of grace, once lost, can never be recovered by any inherent power of our own. Thus we should approach the altar to receive the ashes with great humility, conscious that by mortal sin we are dead before God, even as the verdant palm—the emblem of heavenly peace—reduced to inert ashes, has lost the life and beauty which nature cannot restore.

Finally, the words pronounced by the priest: "Remember, man, that thou art dust and into dust thou shalt return," should bring home to us the great truth which is preached by the impressive ceremony of sprinkling the ashes more eloquently than by words. By reflecting seriously on this truth, by descending frequently in thought to the grave, we shall learn to have a horror of mortal sin, as the inspired author of Ecclesiastes teaches us: "In all thy works remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin" (Eccles. vii, 40).

II. As the soldier who enters the smoke of battle and fights in the thickest of the fight is encouraged and cheered on to victory when he hears the familiar notes of sounding trumpets rising high above the din of battle and the joyous shouts of brave companions announcing victories already won; or, as the athlete on the Marathon course, after he has by feats of endurance and skill gained a foremost place in the beginning of the race, is cheered on to renewed efforts to win the final trial which will crown him with the victor's laurel, even so are we encouraged to persevere in the spiritual fight by the victories of the past. Those who have faithfully gone through the penitential exercises, which begin on Ash Wednesday, are gladdened when they look back, at mid-Lent, and see so many trials won. They rejoice in the hope of final triumph when the palm of victory will be their meed. So, on the fourth Sunday after Ash Wednesday, which marks the middle of Lent, the Introit of the Mass opens with the joyous words of the prophet Isaias: "Rejoice O Jerusalem, and come together all you that love her. Rejoice with joy, you that have been in sorrow, that you may exult and be filled from the breasts of your consolations" (Is. lvi, 10). Hence, this Sunday is known as Laetare Sunday on account of the Introit beginning with the word *laetare,* which means *rejoice.*

The whole service of the Mass shows forth joy and gladness. Instead of violet, the color which is used on all other Sundays during the penitential season, rose-colored vestments are worn by the priest on this Sunday, and the organ, which is silent during the other Sundays of Lent, peals forth its gladsome notes.

By such rejoicing on Laetare Sunday we are reminded of the joys eternal which come after earthly trials; of the gladsome summer which succeeds the gloomy winter. And we are encouraged to persevere in the spiritual combat by the thought that trials and afflictions patiently endured, and acts of penance faithfully performed in this life, are a measure of the heavenly joys which come after, as we are assured by the words of Revelation: "They shall no more hunger, nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall upon them, nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to the living fountains of water. And God shall wipe away all tears" (Apoc. vii, 17).

XVIII. THE SEASON OF LENT

III. Palm Sunday. The Royalty of Christ

BY THE REV. WM. GRAHAM

"Behold the King cometh to thee, meek and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke."—Matt. xxi, 5.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—The leading note in ceremonies to-day is "The Royalty of Christ." This, an essential attribute of His Personality. All authority, kingly or other, centered in Him, Who is King of Kings and Lord of rulers. This, a needful subject at a time when the claims of authority are questioned all round.

I. Main thought of Christ's royalty brought vividly before us in rites of to-day. Whether in sadness or gladness, central idea is His Kingdom. (a) The claims He puts forth imply supreme authority over mankind. Texts and reasons. His kingdom a fact in world's history. (b) Though spiritual in aim and method, yet visible and tangible. How?

II. Christ claims to rule over us, as King, in the realm of: (a) Thought. He claims to set laws to regulate our minds. Order in thought means law, and law binds. Absolute freedom, or license of thought, a chimera. (b) Not only is He King of the mind, He claims, likewise, to rule and regulate our hearts. The world of desires must be subjected to Christ. His will or law penetrates thereto as in thought. (c) Finally, He has a claim as King on our service. We must subject our conduct to His royal authority, as our minds and hearts. Indeed, conduct, or life service, the fruit of mind and heart.

Conclusion.—Obey Him throughout, for "His yoke is sweet, and His burden light."

Introduction.—The thought uppermost in the mind of the Church to-day is the Royalty of Christ. The short-lived triumph and glad hosannas that welcomed the Son of David, on his entry into the holy city, proclaim His kingship. Wise men from the East, and simple shepherds from the hills of Judea, and now the stiff-necked people of Jerusalem, take their turn in paying Him royal honors. Even the haughty representatives of imperial Rome unwittingly recognize His right as King. They weave for Him a crown of thorns, put a purple rag on His shoulders, a reed in His hand for sceptre, and raise Him on a knotty cross for throne, inscribing thereon, as His title, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." And yet this scornful title voiced an eternal truth; for Christ is King, not merely of the Jews, but "Prince of the Kings of the earth" (Apoc. i, 5). "I will give thee the gentiles for thy inheritance and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. ii, 6, 8). Nay! He

claims, and rightly too, all power in Heaven and on earth (Matt. xxviii, 18).

This royalty, or rather supremacy of Christ, is an essential attribute of His divine Personality. His authority must be supreme in every department of human life—in thought, speech and conduct. There is no real superman but Christ. As God-man he has an inherent right to be loved, obeyed and respected. He is truly King and Lord in His own Kingdom, which all men are called upon to enter. His kingly authority, reflected in His Church and Vicar, is, therefore, a standing institution in the world. It is well to be reminded of this great central fact of the royalty of Christ, at a time when this kingly authority of His is being questioned, ignored, or forgotten, as never before. Christ, remember, is more than a holy seer or prophet, more than a teacher and master in Israel, He is our Lord-God and King. Even when struck with the reed, mock symbol of His authority, made "a worm and no man." He was ever a King. His royalty as man, like His glory as God, none can take from Him. It never forsakes Him. As is said of wisdom (Wisdom, Chap. x, 13, 14), "She forsook not the just when he was sold, but delivered him from sinners: she went down with him into the pit. And in bands she left him not, till she brought him the sceptre of the kingdom, and power against those that oppressed him."

I. This thought of the royalty of Christ, whether in triumph or in humiliation, is brought vividly before our minds in the liturgy of to-day. The rites and ceremonies of the day all point to Him as King.

Palms are solemnly blessed and distributed in memory of His entry into Jerusalem, the sole occasion on which His kingly attributes were publicly recognized. The rite used in blessing the palms is so mystic and sacred as to give to this function the rank of a sacramental. We keep them in our houses during the year, and a certain number are burned to furnish the ashes, placed on the heads of the faithful on Ash Wednesday, to remind us that the glory of this world passeth away; and that Christ's everlasting Kingdom is alone eternal. Even His brief triumph on earth to-day passed as a cloud across the sky.

The clergy, bearing their palms, pass in procession to the outside of the church. Cantors enter and the doors are closed. The triumphant hymn, *Gloria laus et honor,* is sung in turn by those

within and those outside the doors. At the end of the hymn the subdeacon knocks at the door with the processional cross. All are then admitted and march solemnly up the church. The church closed, mystically represents heaven shut against us by sin, and opened again by the Cross of Christ, heaven's King and ours. The form of the procession varied considerably in the past. At one epoch the Blessed Sacrament was carried, to make the King's entry more solemn. At Jerusalem the father guardian of the Franciscans used to ride from Olivet on an ass, decked out for the occasion, the more closely to imitate the scene depicted in the gospel of to-day. The procession over, the note and marks of triumph give way to those of gloom. The white vestments of joy are replaced by purple. The passion is sung during the Mass, and the sad rites of Holy Week begin.

But whether in joy or sorrow, humiliation or triumph, the royalty of Christ is insisted on and brought to the front throughout. "The government is upon His shoulders . . . His empire shall be multiplied, . . . He shall sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to establish it and strengthen it with judgment" (Isaias ix, 6, 7). In allusion to the events brought vividly to mind to-day, the prophet says, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, thy King will come to thee, the just and Saviour; he is poor and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zach. ix, 10). Though in appearance a poor Galilean peasant without regal pomp, wealth or vesture, He puts forth claims to power far beyond those vested in such rulers as Moses, David, or Solomon. He claims the right to expound the moral law and regulate private property. He takes the colt and ass as a matter of right. "Tell the owner that the Master hath need of them, and forthwill he will let them go" (Matt. xxi). The term "King," as embodying the whole principle of authority, wheresoever and by whomsoever exercised, is applied to Christ, both in prophecy and history, to express the unlimited and supreme dominion inherent in Him as God-man. "All power," He says, "is given to me in heaven and on earth." The royalty of earthly kings is but a shadow compared to this. He was put to death by the Gentiles for preposterously claiming to be "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," yet Rome, the capital of those who crucified Him, is now the central seat and see of His vicar on earth, ruling an empire on which the sun never sets: *Regni ejus non erit finis*, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

His kingdom and royalty, it is true, in aim, end and methods are not of this world. But though spiritual, His sovereignty is no less visible, tangible, real than that of other kings. His kingdom is as much a matter of history as that of Rome. A continuous line of 249 sovereign pontiffs, claiming and exercising the authority and powers of Christ, cannot be ignored. The story of His kingdom and its varying fortunes is sketched and foretold in such psalms as the 44th and 47th with a vividness almost historic. His sway extends even to "others not of this fold," honest thinkers and doers, whom He rules and guides in spirit till they reach the one fold, and the one shepherd, appointed by Him to "feed His lambs and sheep."

In Him all kingly attributes meet. His claims are not restricted to mere outward obedience and ceremonious forms; they penetrate to the inmost recesses of the very souls of His subjects. He insists on inward loyalty, homage and love as a right. He makes no distinction of persons; and, the more effectually to win His subjects to duty, discarded all the outward forms and trappings of royalty. Even on the one occasion on which He accepted royal honors, He must have cut a sorry figure in the eyes of Pilate's court, as He entered the city surrounded by rude Galilean peasants. And yet, no king would ever presume to demand such whole-souled devoted service as He. And this service myriads to-day gladly render. Nay, they are prepared cheerfully to lay down their lives in defense of his rights and claims as King.

Glance for a moment at what He claims of us by virtue of His royalty. He asks, first of all, to be king over our thoughts—to rule in the realm of mind or intellect. He wants our thoughts to be true, and clean, and honest. He requires faith. And this submission of the mind to His truth, His subjects cheerfully render. Saying the Creed morning and night, as all good members of His kingdom do, they make this homage of the understanding a part of their daily tribute of prayer and praise. Faith is an act of submission to authority that the King of Kings alone can claim. And yet, far from binding us in chains, this ready submission makes us truly free. For hereby "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." No worse slavery than that of error, no greater tyrant than "the father of lies." Heed not the shallow talk of faith drowning or stifling reason. The mind, far from being "cribbed, cabined and confined" by revelation, finds in submission to the King of light a larger, broader and safer field of vision. We need, and never more

than at present, submission to authority in thought—we need law, in fact, *i. e.*, the regulation of our thoughts, as in speech and action. If duty binds us to speak and act rightly, are we free to think wrongly? Can we have pure water from a foul spring? Healthy plants from diseased roots? Thought is running wild to-day for want of authority—for want of a King. Let Christ then reign in your thoughts, for He is the world's true light, "Which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world" (John i, 9). "He that followeth me," *i. e.*, is obedient to me, taketh me as guide and ruler, "walketh not in darkness."

Again, Christ claims, and in the nature of things must claim, to rule over our hearts. He must reign in our desires, as well as in our thoughts. His supreme royalty demands our supreme love. He will not, nor can He in justice, share our hearts on equal terms with others. The creature must rank below the Creator. Father and mother, wife and child, friend and country, one's home and surroundings, may be near and dear to us, yet they are but creatures, nay, they are God's own gifts and must never, and *can* never without sacrilege, take precedence in our hearts of the Creator, and "Giver of every good and perfect gift." Both reason and faith tell us that all must rank in our esteem and love below Him who, though man, is yet in personality and royalty our Lord-God. We are swayed by our desires. They elevate or degrade us. They make of the heart, from which they issue, a limpid fountain or stagnant pool. One's desires make us what we are. They build up our character, for good or evil. If Christ-God reigns not there, the soul is lost. Pray, then, our King and Saviour, to "set charity in order within us," and thus reign supreme in these poor hearts of ours. He is not, like earthly lovers, unreasonably jealous or exclusive. He loves justice, *i. e., order.* He does not require of us to suppress or annihilate the love of the creature, but merely give it due rank. Natural affection, if honest, need not be crushed, wasted, or thwarted—it has simply to be regulated. The heart is the mainspring of life. It is the soul and essence of our personality. Love, the fruit of the heart, is really the only thing we can call our own. We create our own desires, *i. e.*, love, and nothing more. Hence, God asks our hearts, because, more than anything else, they are our own to give, "Son, give me thy heart." "The heart is ours to make it His." Thank God, Christ reigns in numberless hearts to-day. For the sake of the meek and humble King, who entered Jerusalem

in triumph on the first Palm Sunday, crowds to-day of the purest, holiest, choicest sons and daughters of men are daily renouncing all things, voluntarily choosing a life of poverty, chastity, and obedience, so that there may be no earthly hindrances to His reign in their hearts. For one who welcomed Him as King then, there are tens of thousands who adore Him as such to-day: *Hoc fecit Deus, et est mirabile in oculis nostris.*

Lastly, Christ should reign not only in head and heart, but in hand or work. His royalty, His kingly authority, must be supreme over the whole range of conduct. No department of life, public or private, is complete or perfect wherein the reign of Christ, another term for the Kingdom of God, is not recognized. If Christ is banished from the school, the market-place, or the courts of law, decadence is sure to follow, sooner or later. If He does not reign in thought and heart, the very well-heads of action, He will not long reign in conduct. All three are inseparable, and go to make up the Christian character, whether in the individual or in the corporate body. Give us Christian conduct without creed or miracle, is the cry to-day: as well ask for a living body without a living soul. A corpse is not a man. Statues of wood, or bronze, or mural paintings, are not the scenes or heroes they represent—they are lifeless presentations only. To be true Christians, Christ must reign over the whole man or body of men, in mind, in heart, and in conduct. In and through His kingdom, the Church, His royalty in this respect is cheerfully acknowledged by millions all the world over, who know, not by hearsay, but by experience, that "His yoke is sweet and His burden light." Christ's enemies call His subjects *priest-ridden;* but better *priest-ridden* than *devil-ridden,* the usual alternative, broadly speaking, where Christ's royalty is rejected. Men, in the mass, must be ruled and shepherded; they think, love and act on some motive or other, ultimately based on the authority of God or man. Now the royalty of Christ reflects the supreme authority of God. If we "walk not with Christ, to whom shall we go?" Let us rather go to Him, "who," in the words of Peter, ever Christ's spokesman, "has the words of eternal life." *Dominus regit me et nihil mihi deerit.* His Church echoes His voice, and points Him out as "the way, the truth and the life." Christ our King is found only where He promised to be, "all days even to the end of the world," *i. e.,* in and with His Church.

Of Him did God say, "This is my well-beloved Son; hear ye him."

Hear Him in his kingdom—One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic. To have Christ as king, we must be in His kingdom as subjects. To the Church, His kingdom, and her laws we must submit. Not without meaning did Christ enter Jerusalem riding on a colt not yet "trained to the yoke." Christ must subdue untrained, and obstinate, and ever-revolting human nature, and thus bring it in triumph to the heavenly Jerusalem. Let us, therefore, in mind, heart, and conduct submit to the yoke of Christ, our King and Master. Let us say, in the words of Ethai the Gethite, "As the Lord liveth, and as my Lord the King liveth: in what place soever thou shalt be, Lord my King, either in death or in life, there will thy servant be" (II Kings, xv, 21).

XIX. THE SEASON OF LENT

IV. Holy Thursday

BY THE REV. OWEN B. M. MC GUIRE, PH.D., D.D.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—I. (a) Maundy Thursday—reason for name in English. (b) Lord's Supper, or Last Supper—reason for name in Liturgy. (c) Holy Thursday—holy because of events commemorated and because of mysteries actually renewed.

II. What the Church intends by ceremonial of this day. (a) It follows from her mission, which is mission of Christ perpetuated. (b) Hence the events are not merely commemorated, but the realities are actually renewed and mysteries made present. (c) What, then, is commemorated; what and how renewed?

III. What took place on the first Holy Thursday is told by St. Paul. His narrative contains account of four institutions: (a) Blessed Eucharist instituted as a sacrifice—actually renewed as such to-day. (b) Blessed Eucharist instituted on that night as a Sacrament—as such actually given and received here to-day. (c) Blessed Eucharist was instituted as an abiding institution; here to-day Christ remains with us actually in Flesh and Blood; Procession and Repository remind us of this. (d) On the same occasion Christ instituted priesthood of New Law; it is here to-day actually producing same effects; the Mass shows it and the Blessing of the Oils reminds us that it is perpetual.

IV. Sentiments which we should excite in our hearts to-day. Words of St. Augustine.

I. This day, my dear brethren, the Thursday of holy week, is known in the Latin Liturgy as "The Lord's Supper," sometimes also called "The Last Supper." The reason is that the Church on this day commemorates the chief events which took place on the night of the Last Supper, the eve preceding the Crucifixion of our divine Lord. In English the day is known to us under the name of "Holy Thursday," sometimes also "Mandy" or "Maundy" Thursday. It takes this latter name from a unique ceremony of this day by which the Church commemorates the great act of humility performed by our divine Lord in connection with the Last Supper in washing the feet of His disciples. In imitation of this act the Pope to-day washes the feet of twelve poor persons. So do also bishops in certain countries and the heads of some religious communities. At a time when faith and piety reigned more than at present it was usual for emperors and kings to do the same. The ceremony is still performed on this day by the Emperor of Austria at Vienna, and

by the King of Spain at Madrid. The ceremony, as contained in the Missal, begins with the Latin words *"Mandatum novum*—A new commandment I give you that you love one another." They were the words of our divine Lord to the apostles on the occasion. In the ages of faith, when England was Catholic, this antiphon was chanted in Latin by the congregation, as many parts of the Mass are to this day in the thoroughly Catholic districts of Europe where the old tradition has not been disturbed. This word "Mandatum" accordingly became so well known to them as to give name to the day, and it found its way into the English language in the form of "Maundy" or "Mandy." We have other examples similar. For instance, "Laetare" Sunday is so called from the first word of the Introit of the Mass for that day.

But at the present time, my brethren, the day is usually known to all Catholics as "Holy Thursday." And surely there is no day in all the year that deserves more the name of "holy"—holy it is because of the events which it commemorates and which were first enacted on the night of the Last Supper, and holy because of the sublime and adorable mysteries that are this day actually enacted in every Catholic Church, mysteries that are not mere commemorations of things that are past, but are to us who believe living and present realities, the very same events really present and actually performed before our eyes. It is this fact of reality in conjunction with our living faith that gives this day its character in our liturgy. These give to the day a touch and note of triumph even while we stand in the shadow of the gloom and suffering of Calvary. They make its sacred ceremonies living, present, and even personal facts, and distinguish them from all mere formal representations and empty symbolism.

II. To enter, therefore, fully into the spirit of liturgy of this day, to take a profitable part in these adorable mysteries, let us for a moment consider first what the Church intends in these celebrations.

The Church, my brethren, is Christ perpetuated among men. Her mission is His mission. She continues, and will to the end of time continue, the work which He came on earth to perform. The same commission, the same office which He received from the Eternal Father and for which He came into the world, this same she has received from Him and continues in the world. Nor has He left her to herself in the performance of this office. He abides with her. He

remains with her not only by His assisting grace, not only by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but He remains with her Himself in reality, in person, in the very flesh and blood which He assumed in becoming man for the redemption of the world. In giving this office, this commission to His Church in the persons of His apostles He assured them of His abiding presence by the words, *"Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world"* (Matt. xxviii, 20). But on the night of the Last Supper, having washed the feet of His disciples, He instituted the adorable mystery of the Eucharist, wherein, as an everlasting legacy of His love for mankind, He left Himself to us to be forever present with us in body and blood and person. This is the awful mystery that gives character to this day; this is the awful presence that pervades its liturgy; this is the awful fact that lifts our celebration of these mysteries from the region of a mere commemoration or empty symbolism and places it among living and present actualities; this is what makes our Church indeed the house of God, and inspires even our little children to speak with baited breath in the presence of that altar. For they know who is there and who it is that hears their every word and sees their every action.

The Church then is Christ perpetuated among men. His mission is her mission. His office her office. The object of His mission was twofold. He came to redeem the world and this He did by the immolation of Himself on the Cross of Calvary. He came to teach the world and this He did by unfolding a body of truths which He proposed for our belief, and by a life of virtue which He proposed for our example. This mission must continue, for it was intended as the means of salvation not merely for those who lived and saw Him in the flesh when He was visibly among men, but for all men and to the end of all time. The Church continues this mission, or rather He performs it in and through His Church. She is Christ continued. In her liturgy throughout the year by a succession of feasts and times of penance she endeavors to bring home to the minds of her children the truths which Christ taught, to renew, to re-enact before their eyes the mysteries which Christ unfolded or instituted, to present to them now in one phase and again in another the life which He lived here below and proposed for the imitation of all who would follow Him. What the Church intends then, my brethren, what the Church does in the ceremonies and liturgy of this blessed Thursday, is to renew, to re-enact, to make again living and

present to us the same awful mysteries that were acted or instituted on the night of the Last Supper.

III. Let us now consider what these mysteries were, what these mysteries are, which the Church renews for us in the ceremonies and liturgy of this day. When our divine Lord on the eve of His passion had, in company with His apostles, eaten the paschal supper for the last time, according to the ceremonies of the old law, He arose from the table and proceeded to wash the feet of His disciples. The Church in her ministers renews this act of love and humility on Holy Thursday. The ceremony in which she does so is the last of the morning service usually and follows immediately the divesting or stripping of the altars. The hour for it, however, is not determined by the liturgy which prescribes it for any convenient hour after the ceremony referred to. We have already referred to this unique ceremony; and must, as the time is brief, hasten on to the consideration of others.

In accordance with what we have said of the mission of the Church, and of her intention in the liturgy, let us in all we have to say consider two things: (1) What was done by our divine Lord on the first Holy Thursday when these mysteries were instituted. (2) What the Church does on each succeeding holy Thursday when these same mysteries are renewed in all their reality.

After having washed the feet of his disciples our divine Lord proceeded to the institution of the adorable mystery of the blessed Eucharist. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, and in that portion of it which is read in this day's Mass, St. Paul thus recounts what took place on that ever-memorable evening: "For I have received of the Lord that also which I have told you (delivered to you): That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed took bread, and giving thanks broke and said: Take ye and eat; this is my Body, which shall be delivered for you; this do for the commemoration of me. In like manner also the chalice after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in my Blood; this do ye as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me. For, as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come" (I Cor. xi, 23-26).

In this brief narrative of the Apostle we have recorded the institution of the great mystery of the blessed Eucharist. "Having loved his own who were in the world," says St. John, "He loved them unto

the end," and out of love He instituted for us this great Mystery of Mysteries on the night before He suffered. Brief as are these words of the Apostle, they contain in reality the account of the institution of four great mysteries, all of which center round the blessed Eucharist. Let us briefly consider them one by one, noting first how they were on that night instituted by Christ and then how they are really and substantially renewed and made present in our churches to-day.

(*a*) Firstly, the blessed Eucharist was instituted by Christ as a sacrifice. It is the great and perpetual sacrifice of the New Law which is daily offered on our altars. It has been from the beginning the constant belief of Christians and the perpetual teaching of the Church that this sacrifice in no way differs from the sacrfice of Calvary except in the manner of offering. This sacrifice was offered by Christ to the Eternal Father when, taking the bread and wine into His sacred hands, He pronounced the words "This is My Body: This is My Blood."

We have here renewed to-day before us on the altar the self-same sacrifice. Here we have with us really and substantially present the same Jesus Christ as priest and victim; present in the same Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. It is, therefore, for us not a mere commemoration of something that is past; not a mere empty representation, but the very self-same reality renewed and made present among us. It is for this reason that the Mass to-day, even in the midst of Holy Week, has the tone of solemnity and joy. The Mass is solemn. The "Gloria" is chanted. The bells are rung. The color of the vestments is white, expressive of joy and thanksgiving. This all indicates the Church's joy and gratitude for this most wonderful gift, and into this spirit of the Church we should enter with all our hearts. Let us rejoice with the Church, for this mystery is our triumph. It is the triumph of faith over sight, of spirit over matter, of Christ over the world.

(*b*) Secondly, in the institution of the blessed Eucharist, our divine Lord instituted a Sacrament, a Sacrament infinitely surpassing all other Sacraments. This Sacrament He administered to His Apostles, saying: "Take ye and eat: Take ye and drink. This is My Body: This is My Blood." The other Sacraments are indeed the channels, but the channels only, of Divine Grace. This one is the very source and fountain of all grace. Again, we have here in the Church to-day not merely a representation of what our divine

Lord gave, and the Apostles received, on that blessed night, but in every Communion received at this altar rail to-day the same Jesus Christ is received really and substantially.

(*c*) The third great mystery contained in the institution of the blessed Eucharist is that it has been left us by our divine Lord as an abiding institution. He is not only offered in the Mass and received by us in Communion, but He lives with us, remains with us, always present on our altars, really and substantially, in the same Body and Blood which He consecrated at the Last Supper and offered for us on the following day on the Cross. Of this truth we are forcibly reminded by the Liturgy of the Church during the procession; and also by the invitation which she extends to us to come and visit Him during the day at the repository. My brethren, how happy we should be in this our Catholic faith to-day, and how grateful to our divine Lord for this ineffable legacy of love which he has left us in leaving us Himself!

(*d*) In the fourth place, Our Lord, in instituting the holy Eucharist, instituted at the same time the priesthood of the New Law. By the words "Do this for a commemoration of me," He ordained His Apostles priests and gave them the power and the commission to offer up this sacrifice to the end of time. And here in our churches to-day we have the same priesthood, the same power, and the same commission. It is not, again, a mere commemoration of what once was, but a power that is real and active and present; producing the same effects as when it was first instituted. We have it here present in the Mass where the sacrifice is offered, and we are reminded of its perpetuity by the consecration of the sacred oils which takes place to-day in Cathedral churches where there is a bishop to perform the ceremony. These oils are used in the administration of the Sacraments and in the ordination of priests. Their consecration on this day reminds us that the priesthood is perpetual, that it will be continued to the end of time, and that by its power will be continued, the sacrifice of the Mass, the reality of holy Communion and the abiding presence of Jesus Christ in the holy Eucharist to the end of time.

Such, my brethren, are the wonderful mysteries that are this day commemorated in our churches, and not only commemorated, but made again really present among us. Let us try to enter into the spirit of the Church in celebrating them. Let us preserve for the remainder of the day a secret tabernacle, a pious solitude for our

divine Lord in our hearts, even while we go about our work, or pass through the crowded street. Let us excite in these hearts sentiments of love toward Him, of gratitude for His great gift, of sorrow for sin, and astonishment at His ineffable goodness. For truly, as St. Augustine teaches, this great gift has exhausted the infinite wisdom, the riches and the omnipotence of God himself.

XX. THE SEASON OF LENT

V. Good Friday

BY THE REV. OWEN B. M. MC GUIRE, PH.D., D.D.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Good Friday. (a) Good is that which makes us happy or in some way contributes to our happiness. (b) This day then, of all days, deserves the name—some of the blessings purchased for us on this day.

II. (a) The purpose for which Christ came and died. (b) The same the mission of His Church. (c) She renews this mystery every day; but this day she sets apart to commemorate this greatest of tragedies. (d) To do this, let us follow her ceremonial.

III. Following the Liturgy, we note each part and the special lesson it teaches: (a) Black is the color—indicates mourning and sorrow. (b) Altars are bare—no Mass, as Church keeps our minds entirely on Bloody Sacrifice of Cross. (c) The prophecies read show promises and types of Calvary; the Passion shows fulfilment. Prayers for all show universality of Redemption. Our charity should be universal. Veneration of Cross in its two acts shows what sentiments we should cherish. Procession and Communion reminds us that the Victim is still and always with us.

IV. Lessons and practises for the day and the year: (a) Intention of the Church that we remember this awful sacrifice and make it always and especially to-day the center of our thoughts. This also wish of our divine Lord. This our duty as privileged children. (b) Specific ceremony for to-day is Veneration of Cross. To continue it and make it fruitful, ask and answer—Who? What? Why? And (c) Repeat frequently hymn of Church, "O faithful Cross."

I. This day is known to Christians under the name of Good Friday. Good is that which is calculated in some way to make us happy. Goodness itself is the source of all happiness. That is, therefore, good, and deserving of the name, from which our happiness comes, or which contributes in some way to its making. Accordingly, of all days in the year, this one deserves especially the name of "good." What happened on this day is the fountain whence flow all the blessings of Christianity. The Cross which on this day was raised on Calvary has become the symbol and center of our holy religion. The sacrifice which was offered on that Cross is the source of all the good, of all the happiness we may enjoy here, and of all that we may hope for hereafter. By the sin of our first parents we were sold into the slavery of satan; on this day, by the

sacrifice of the Cross, we were purchased back into the liberty of the children of God. Truly, indeed, may the Church to-day in the midst of all her sorrow chant in the holy Mass that "by the wood of the Cross *the whole earth is filled with joy.*" We were children of wrath cast out from the face of our Father. On this day we have been reconciled to Him and made again His favored children. We were under a dreadful curse and destined to eternal punishment; on this day we have been restored to our birthright, made brethren of Christ and co-heirs with Him to heaven.

From the day when Adam first sinned until the moment when the last man shall receive the last grace amid the chaos of a dissolving world, every grace, every blessing conferred on mankind has been purchased by the sacrifice this day offered on Calvary. From the moment when the waters of baptism glistened on our forehead until we receive the Last Blessing in the pangs of death, every good thought we think, every grace conferred upon us, every Sacrament that strengthens us, every Communion, every absolution—in a word every blessing to you, my brethren, and to me, flows from the sacrifice this day offered on the Cross, and without it would not be possible. We were sinners, and by these means we are sanctified. But, as the Apostle says, "Without the shedding of blood—and of the Blood of Christ—there is no remission of sin." Truly, then, may this day be called " good," since it is to us the source of all good in time and in eternity.

II. In our meditation on the liturgy of Holy Thursday we saw that the Church is Christ perpetuated among men. Her mission is His mission. She is His representative on earth. She continues the work for which He came into the world. The Son of God came into this world for a twofold purpose. As the Church sings in the creed on every Sunday, "For us men and for our salvation He descended from heaven and was made man, and was crucified also for us." He came, in the first place, to redeem us, to satisfy the justice of God which had been offended and outraged by sin. This He accomplished on the first Good Friday by the immolation of Himself as a victim on the Cross of Calvary. He came, in the second place, to teach us what we are to believe and what we are to do if we would profit by that redemption and have its fruits applied to our own individual souls. This second purpose He accomplished, and will accomplish to the end of time, by the teaching of His doctrine and the example of His daily life. To

perpetuate this sacrifice, to perpetuate also this teaching and this life, He established His Church. Christ has died for us in vain if we forget His suffering and the sacrifice He offered for us; if we forget His teaching and His example, "Forget not the kindness of thy surety," says the Holy Spirit, speaking through the inspired writer, "for He hath given His life for thee." It is to keep these things fresh in the minds of her children that the Church has established the succession of feasts and fasts which she has distributed around the annual cycle, called the Ecclesiastical Year. She thus makes the year and its divisions a perpetual lesson to the Christian soul. Now under one phase, again under another, she keeps continually before our minds the life and teachings of her divine Lord and Master. But there is one mystery of which she would keep us in constant memory. Of it she would remind us every day. It is the mystery of His sufferings and death. On every day in the year she commemorates the Bloody Sacrifice of Calvary by the true and real, though Unbloody, Sacrifice of the Altar, in which the same Jesus Christ is really present and is offered anew for the living and the dead. Yet, on one day of the year she would have us devote all our thoughts to this great mystery by which the world has been redeemed. On one day of the year she employs all the ceremonies of her liturgy to commemorate this greatest of tragedies. This day is Good Friday. To-day she would have us fix all our thoughts on the Cross, on the Victim which is nailed thereto and dies in agony for our sins. That we may fulfil this intention of the Church, let us follow her in the ceremonies which she has instituted for this purpose.

III. (*a*) You will observe, first of all, my brethren, that the color of the vestments for this day is *black*. Black is the sign of mourning and sorrow. The Church to-day mourns for the sufferings and death of her Beloved Spouse, and she would have us join with her in this sorrow.

She would also have us excite in our hearts sentiments of true sorrow and detestation for our sins which have caused His bitter sufferings.

(*b*) You will also observe, my brethren, that to-day the altars of the Church are left bare. They have remained so since the ceremony of "Divesting the Altars," which took place yesterday after Mass. This is to indicate that to-day there is no sacrifice offered in our

churches. There is no Mass in the ordinary and proper sense of the word. Instead of it is performed a ceremony called the "Mass of the Presanctified Mysteries." In this ceremony no sacrifice is offered, nor is there any consecration of the holy Eucharist. For Communion the priest receives the Sacred Host which he had consecrated the day before. For this reason the ceremony is so called, that is, "Mass of the *Presanctified.*" Hence, in the ceremony which is performed, the Church, instead of the Mass, contents herself with a bare representation of the Passion, and makes it her chief endeavor to expose to the faithful Jesus Christ crucified for them. She offers not the unbloody sacrifice because she would to-day fix our eyes, our hearts, our minds and thoughts on the Bleeding Victim on Calvary. She would have us sit with her at the foot of the Cross and in loving adoration weep for the sufferings of our divine Lord, bewailing our own sins and the sins of the whole world. Let us do this in the spirit of our Holy Mother, the Church, and continue to follow her in the sacred ceremonies she has instituted for this purpose.

(*c*) The Church begins the Mass of the Presanctified by reading such Lessons and Tracts from holy Scripture as contain predictions of the coming of the Redeemer, or types of His immolation on the Cross. After these comes the history of the Passion as related by St. John. It is sung by three voices and has a most solemn effect. One voice recites the current history of the Passion; the second is the plaintive voice of our dear Redeemer himself, as He humbly speaks on various occasions, or prays to the Eternal Father during the dreadful tragedy; and the third is the boisterous and barbarous voice of the Jews urging forward the measures of cruelty that are to end in His death. This recital of the Passion shows how the Law and the Prophecies already chanted are fulfilled and verified. During this recital the Church would again have us join in loving sympathy with the suffering Redeemer, whose plaintive voice we hear in the chant, and would have us abhor the sentiments of the rabble demanding His death with which we also joined when we sinned against Him.

After the chant of the Passion there follow the prayers of the Church for all sorts of persons, even schismatics, heretics, pagans, and Jews. Christ has died in vain for all of us if the merits of His Sacred Passion are not applied to our individual souls. The Church, therefore, prays for this application of the fruits of His Passion.

None are excluded from the prayers on a day when Christ died for all men, and prayed even for His persecutors and for those who mocked Him while He hung in agony on the Sacred Wood. We should join in these prayers and offer them in the spirit of the Church, remembering in gratitude and love that of ourselves we were no better than the worst of those for whom these prayers are offered, and thanking God for the inestimable gift of Faith which opens for us the treasures of the Sacred Passion.

After these prayers comes a most impressive part of the ceremonies. It is the part which is most distinctly characteristic of this day and appropriate for it. This particular ceremony is the exposition and veneration of the Cross. Having finished the prayers, the priest puts off his vestments, and taking from the altar the cross covered with a veil, he goes to the Epistle Corner, where he uncovers the top of it, and, showing it to the people, sings the Antiphon, "Behold the wood of the Cross on which hung the Salvation of the world." This is repeated again, and a third time, as the priest approaches the center of the altar and uncovers the other parts of the crucifix. In response to the priest, each time all bend the knee, and the choir answers, "Come, let us adore." Finally, laying the crucifix on a cushion prepared for it, the priest retires to a certain distance, puts off his shoes, approaches the sacred symbol with three prostrations at different distances, and, bending over it, reverently kisses it. The assistant sacred ministers do the same. After this it is presented to the faithful, that they also may reverence it likewise by kissing it. The sacred image is left thus exposed in a convenient place during the day, that all who enter the church may venerate it in like manner.

You will notice, my brethren, that in this veneration of the crucifix there are two chief acts. We bend the knee before it, and we kiss it. These two acts are expressive respectively of the sentiments of reverence and of love. To bend the knee is a sign of reverence. To kiss is expressive of love. These, then, are the sentiments we should carry with us from the church to-day after taking part in this ceremony. We should cherish them in the solitude of our hearts even while during the day we walk the crowded streets. We should in that same solitude make frequent acts of this reverence and of this love, as well as of heartfelt sorrow for our sins, resolving never again by sin to "crucify the Son of God and to make a mockery of Him."

When the adoration of the Cross is nearly finished, the candles upon the altar are lighted. After the adoration the cross is again set in its place upon the altar, and the priest, with the others, goes in procession to the Repository for the Blessed Sacrament. While the procession returns, that beautiful hymn, *Vexilla Regis prodeunt,* is chanted by the choir. Arrived at the altar, the priest recites the *Pater Noster* and a few other prayers from the Mass, and finishes the sacred office for the morning by receiving the Sacred Victim that was slain this day for the salvation of mankind. All then retire from the sanctuary in silence. The crucifix is left exposed. The altar is again bare. The whole church has the aspect of desolation, mourning and sorrow.

IV. Having assisted at these holy functions, my dear brethren, how are we going to spend the remainder of the day and the night. The sacred crucifix is left exposed here for our veneration and love, and this indicates the wish of the Church. She would have the thought of the mystery of Calvary occupy our entire souls during the remainder of the day and night. All religion centers in this mystery. All our hopes are grounded on it. By it and with it God's justice is satisfied and man is redeemed. No wonder, then, that throughout the entire year, but especially on this day, the Church wishes to keep it constantly before our minds. And this is in accordance also with the wish, yes, with the dying wish of our divine Lord Himself. "If I be lifted up," He had said, "I shall draw all things to myself." And on the night before He suffered He left us the blessed Eucharist, to be a perpetual daily memorial of His Passion. "Do this for a commemoration of me," was the commission He gave His Apostles in ordaining them priests (St. John xii, and St. Luke xxii). The daily sacrifice which they were to offer was left us "to show the death of the Lord until He come" (I. Cor. xi). Let us then on this day above all days make His sacred Passion the center of our thoughts. We are His favored children, the children of His household. Let us not be as spoiled children, forgetful of His goodness and our own advantages in the house of our Father. There are those who know not Christ and have not heard of this mystery of His love. There are others who profess His name, but, outside the pale of His true Church, cannot to-day take part in the sacred mysteries at which we have assisted. Others still, good Catholics, are distant from church, or engaged in earning their daily bread and thus prohibited from the privileges that we

enjoy. If, therefore, we forget Him to-day, who is going to remember Him?

Let us then to-day reserve for our crucified Redeemer a solitude in our hearts even in the crowded streets and in the midst of our occupations; and let us excite ourselves to frequent acts of adoration and love towards Him. That you may spend the time yet remaining before the Resurrection profitably in this manner, I would, my brethren, recommend to you two things:

Firstly. Taking our place at the foot of the Cross in company with our blessed Mother, and looking up into the face of our beloved Saviour dying in agony, let us frequently during the day ask ourselves three questions: Who is He that suffers? What does He suffer? Why does He suffer?

Who? What? Why? This is the advice of St. Ignatius to those who would meditate on the Sacred Passion. Who? It is God himself, the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, the Creator of the world, He who holds us and all things created in the hollow of His hand. This we must not forget amid all His humiliation and ignominy. What does he suffer? The most cruel, the most shameful, the most humiliating torments. He suffers in soul and in body, in His honor, in His reputation. His soul was sorrowful even unto death. From the top of His head to the sole of His foot His body was one gaping wound. He was spat upon and mocked, ridiculed and blasphemed. And *why* all this? For me. "He loved *me*," says the Apostle, "and delivered Himself up *for me*." Yes, my brethren, for you and for me. These words of the Apostle are as true for me as if I were the only one to be redeemed, the only one for whom He suffered. His sacrifice was necessary to satisfy God's justice for *my* sins. *Who? What? Why?* And as we repeat these questions in our hearts, let us fall down in spirit at the foot of the Cross and reverently kiss His sacred feet. These were the two acts the Church invited us to perform this morning when she uncovered the Sacred Image. Let us not tire of repeating them during the day.

Secondly. There are no prayers to which grace is so surely attached as the prayers which the Church herself uses in the liturgy. We are always safe when we follow what she recommends and recite the prayers which she prescribes. The Veneration of the Cross is the particular act which she recommends to the faithful on this day, and we have just seen how and with what sentiments we

can continue it during the day and, indeed, during the year. While the adoration of the Cross proceeds in the morning office, the choir recites a beautiful hymn. This hymn you will find done into English in your Holy Week Book. I would recommend that you commit to memory the refrain of this hymn, the first stanza, namely, which is repeated after each verse of the recitation. Commit this to memory. It will require but a few minutes, and then repeat it during the day in the sanctuary which you have reserved for the crucified Redeemer in your hearts:

O faithful cross! O noblest tree!
In all our woods there's none like thee:
No earthly groves, no shady bowers,
Produce such leaves, such fruit, such flowers,
Sweet are the nails, and sweet the wood
That bears a weight so sweet and good.

XXI. THE SEASON OF LENT

VI. Holy Saturday

BY THE REV. OWEN B. M. MC GUIRE, PH.D., D.D.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—I. (a) Standing on border-line between Lent and Eastertide, it partakes of character of both seasons. (b) Divine wisdom of the Church shown in the way she uses man's own innate nature and the distinction of seasons in leading him to God. (c) She uses both these to make him realize the mysteries of the Death and Resurrection of Christ. (d) Let us, then, ask what is this day commemorated and then see how the Church makes it again present to us.

II. On the First Holy Saturday. (a) The Sacred Body reposes in the tomb. (b) The Blessed Soul descends to Limbo. (c) The Blessed Mother and the Disciples await the promised Resurrection. (d) Some basic truths of our religion that are connected with Christ's Death and Resurrection, and are this day in symbols represented to us.

III. Various morning ceremonies preceding the Mass, and their symbolic meaning. (a) Blessing of New Fire and the Triple Candle. (b) Blessing of Paschal Candle and lighting of all the lamps in church. (c) Ceremonies connected with baptism of the Catechumens, i. e., the prophecies, blessing of baptismal font, Litany of the Saints.

IV. The Mass, solemn, expresses joy (a) which Church feels, (b) and which every Christian heart should feel in Christ's triumph.

V. Peroration.

I. In the liturgy of the Church this day is called *Holy Saturday.* It is in our own language sometimes call also *Easter Eve.* Standing as it does on the border-line between the penitential time of Lent and the joyful Eastertide it partakes in its ceremonies of the character of both these holy seasons.

In all her dealings with man the Church manifests her divine character and the supreme wisdom by which she is enlightened and guided. She understands man because she is guided by the spirit of God who created man. She understands the whole man. She proposes to his intelligence the truths which have been revealed from heaven. She strengthens his will by the grace of her Sacraments. She teaches him to bring his passions and animal nature into subjection to his reason. She understands the human heart; understands the motives of its action, the object of its craving, the means by which alone it can be made happy. She has but one object in view—to bring man to Christ, to bring him to the knowledge, the

love, and the service of God, who created him and redeemed him to accomplish this object. She appeals to every noble instinct, every faculty of the nature within him. She uses also every good influence of the nature without and around him. In nothing, perhaps, is this supreme wisdom of the Church in dealing with man shown more clearly than in the manner in which she utilizes time and the divisions of time, season and the distinction of season.

The statement may seem a paradox, and yet it is but the simple truth that the Church has made the year. She has not made the physical laws by which the sun is guided in his course. But she has made the year as we understand it. She has divided it as we have it and use it. She has made Advent and Christmas, New Year's and Candlemas, Shrovetide and Lent, Eastertide and Ascension and all the other feasts and seasons by which the year, as it revolves, becomes a perpetual lesson to the Christian soul. Understanding man as he is, and knowing that human life is made up of a series of joys and sorrows, she has distinguished a time for laughing and a time for weeping; a time for festival and a time for fasting; a time for serious reflection and a time for innocent recreation.

It is now six weeks since we entered on the sorrowful and penitential season of Lent. In her office and liturgy on that day the Church reminds man of his lowly origin and of the fleeting and transitory character of his life here below. Placing the blessed ashes on his forehead she calls him to humility and penance by the words in which she addresses him, "Remember man that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return." But wonderful wisdom of the Catholic Church! While she would humble us for our sins and remind us of our origin from the dust, she would also have us remember that we have been exalted in Christ and would remind us of the glory of our destiny. She would have us weep, but also rejoice. She has shown us Calvary, but would also lead us to Thabor. She would have us suffer with Christ, but also rejoice with Him. She would teach us, indeed, that if we hope to rejoice with Him we must first share His sufferings. Her object is to bring us to Christ; or, we might say, to bring Christ to us to make Him live in our memory, in our hearts and souls. To do this she has instituted these holy seasons and arranged the ceremonial of this day. She is Christ's representative. She continues His work and mission. He came to redeem us, but also to teach us. He has taught us by the truths and mysteries which He proposed for our

belief and by the life which He proposed for our example. His death is the cause of our redemption. His resurrection is the hope, the cause and pattern of our own. These lessons she has continually impressed on us during the holy season of Lent. We have now arrived at its close. We are about to enter on the joyous time of Easter. This day's ceremonies are intended by the Church to show us what these seasons mean, and what they mean in the example of Christ. She would have us remember and understand what occurred on the first holy Saturday and she would have us live that same over again to-day. To enter then into the spirit of the Church and to learn the lessons which she teaches let us ask what is this day commemorated and then see the various ceremonies by which it is again made present to us.

II. When our divine Lord expired on the Cross His blessed Soul released from the Body descended to Limbo "to preach," as St. Peter tells us, "to those spirits that were in prison," that is, to announce to the souls of the just who had died since the beginning of the world, the joyful tidings of their long-expected deliverance. His Precious Body was, in the course of the afternoon, taken down from the Cross and lovingly placed in the tomb. The Saviour has died, the world is in darkness and gloom, the Apostles are dispersed and hiding, the blessed Mother with St. John and the holy women have retired to privacy in the city. All await the fulfilment of the promised Resurrection. The sacred Body of our divine Lord reposes lifeless in the tomb. But it is the Body of the God incarnate, united still substantially to the Second Person of the adorable Trinity and, therefore, worthy of supreme reverence and adoration. Prophecy had foretold that He would remain *three days* in the tomb. The true meaning of these words appeared in their fulfilment. He remained in the tomb but a part, and a very short part, of the third day. For it was also foretold that He shortened the time, as if ardently desirous to accomplish His victory and to bring joy to His chosen ones. We do not know precisely from the Gospel the hour and the moment when He arose. It was early. It would not be rash to say that it was yet night. He was already risen when the holy women reached the tomb, and we are told that they came "in the end of the Sabbath when it began to dawn toward the first day of the week." We know, therefore, that on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the sacred Soul of Jesus returned to quicken once more the Body that lay lifeless in the tomb, and

He arose again from the dead. This also, as well as His repose in the tomb, is commemorated in the liturgy of Holy Saturday. In fact, the liturgy for this day consists of two principal parts: the first commemorating His repose in the tomb, the other representing Him to us as coming forth from the grave and triumphing over death by His Resurrection. The greater part of the office for this day was formerly performed in the night following, to honor the time of our Saviour's resurrection. These are the events commemorated on this day by the Catholic Church. It is these she would represent to us by her liturgy for this day. To understand still more fully how she does this by the ceremonies of Holy Saturday it will be well to recall a few truths that lie at the basis of our holy religion and are intimately connected with the mysteries just recorded.

Firstly, a new world began with the Resurrection of Christ from the dead. Christ is the light as He is the life of this new creation.

Again, as by His sufferings and death He has left us an example, so His Resurrection is the model, the pattern of our own resurrection.

Again, in a symbolic meaning as Christ died for sinners and arose again in glory, so we, as we are taught by Holy Scripture, must die to sin that we may rise to the grace and sanctity of a new life.

And, again, this is particularly true of, and accomplished in, Baptism; where the sinner is buried in the baptismal water, as in a mystical grave, and is taken out again animated with a new life of grace. Bearing these truths in mind and the events connected with them, and this day commemorated, we may now consider how beautifully and with what consummate wisdom the Church in her ceremonial represents them to us.

III. The office may be divided into two parts: The first is consecrated to the memory of Our Lord in His sepulchre, the other to His glorious Resurrection. The office begins with the Matins or Tenebrae, which were recited last evening; it ends with the Mass to-day. The various ceremonies which precede the Mass this morning have to do with a symbolic representation of the basic truths to which we have referred as connected with the mysteries we this day commemorate.

(1) *The New Fire and the Triple Candle.*—The ceremonies of the day commence with the blessing of the New Fire, the Paschal Fire. The altars, divested of their ornaments on Holy Thursday, await this New Fire to illuminate them.

This whole ceremony is full of religious meaning. A new world, as we have said, commenced with the Death and Resurrection of Christ. He is the *light* of this new world, for He, and He only, "enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world" (St. John i, 9). He was also to inflame this new world by that charity which brought Him down from heaven. "I am come to cast fire on the earth," He had said, "and what will I but that it be kindled." Fire is the principle of light and heat, and in this ceremony is used to figure the mission of enlightenment and love which Our Lord and Saviour came to accomplish on earth. All the lights in the Church have been put out to signify how the world was seated in darkness before His coming. They are all lit anew from this Paschal fire to signify that He is the Light of the world. The Triple Candle, which is the first lighted from the New Fire, is an emblem of this Light of Christ. It represents the Unity and Trinity of God, and shows in this symbolic way that faith in this adorable mystery proceeds from the light communicated to us by Christ arisen from the dead.

(2) *Blessing of the Paschal Candle.*—Next follow the blessing and lighting of the Paschal Candle. This candle is a figure of the Body of Jesus Christ to-day, and, not being lighted at first, represents Him dead. The five grains of incense, inserted in the form of a cross during the blessing, remind us of His five wounds and of the aromatic spices with which they were embalmed in the sepulchre. The blessing is performed in exulting tones suitable to denote the victory of our Saviour in His Resurrection over sin and death and hell. The lighting of the Paschal Candle represents His Body, which was dead, rising again to a new life. The lighting of all the other candles and lamps from the same source, while it shows that Christ is the Light of the whole world, shows also and teaches us that the Resurrection of the Head is the cause of, and will be followed by the resurrection of the members.

(3) *Ceremonies Connected with the Baptism of the Catechumens.*—All the ceremonies that follow the blessing of the Paschal Candle until the commencement of the Mass have reference to Baptism, and were connected on this day with the Baptism of the Catechumens. It was usual in early times when converts from Paganism to Christianity were numerous to have them presented for Baptism on this day. Hence, the administration of this Sacrament was part of this day's ceremonial. These new Christians had gone through a special

course of training and instruction during which they were called Catechumens. And, indeed, the Church could not have appointed a more suitable time for the solemn administration of Baptism which is, as we have seen, a lively representation of Our Lord's Resurrection. Let us see then in the ceremonies with what care, wisdom, and also touching beauty our holy Mother Church carried out the administration of this great Sacrament by which we are all made Christians.

(*a*) First there are read from the Old Testament twelve lessons called *prophecies.* These show the connection between the Old Law and the New, the former being the forerunner of the latter, foreshadowing it in its rites and ceremonies, and more distinctly still in the predictions of its prophets. All this is intended for the instruction of the Catechumens and to dispose them for a worthy reception of the Sacrament. After each prophecy a solemn prayer is chanted to beg of God for the new Christians the effects and fruits of the Sacrament by which they are to be admitted to the fold of Christ; that "thus being planted with Christ in the likeness of His death" they were now to rise with Him in the likeness of His Resurrection (Rom. vi, 5).

(*b*) After the recitation of the prophecies and before the administration of the Sacrament there comes the *Blessing of the Baptismal Font.* This is carried out with ceremonies that are replete with symbolic teaching. The water is divided by the hand of the priest in the form of a cross. He exorcises it; that is, drives from it the power of the evil spirit, plunges the Paschal Candle into it, and mixes with it the holy oil and chrism. All this is to teach us that we were under the power of satan and of sin, and that through the merits of Christ's Death and Resurrection we are now set free through Baptism and restored to grace; or, as St. Paul expresses this great central truth of our holy religion: "For we are buried together with Him by Baptism unto death; that as Christ is risen from the dead, by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life."

(*c*) After the Benediction of the Font the Sacrament was solemnly administered and then followed the *Litany of the Saints* to beg of God that the newly baptized may persevere in the grace they have just received. This litany reminds us of two things: that those who believed in Christ followed His law and were faithful to the grace of their Baptism, are now in glory with Him and are

ready and able to intercede for us. Secondly, all the petitions of the litany show that every blessing we ask, every grace we receive, comes, and must come to us through the merits of Christ who has died for us; who, as St. Paul teaches, "was delivered up for our sins, and more again for our justification" (Rom. iv, 25).

IV. After the litany the Mass of the Resurrection is celebrated with all possible solemnity. This Mass was in the early ages of the Church celebrated in the night. Hence, in the ceremonial and liturgy the Saviour is represented to us as coming out of the grave, anticipating the dawn of Easter and triumphing over death, sin and sorrow. The whole Mass partakes of the tone of joy and triumph. The *Gloria in Excelsis* is intoned, the bells are rung, the coverings are dropped from the pictures and sacred images, and the *alleluias* betoken the joy, the deep and hearty joy of the Church in the triumph of her beloved Spouse. They should also express the joy of every Christian heart in the celebration of an event, whereby, according to the words of St. Paul, "God, who is rich in mercy, hath raised us up, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places through Christ Jesus."

V. Let us then, my brethren, enter heartily into the spirit of the Church in the celebration of this great festival. Let us rejoice with Christ, for He is truly risen. His sufferings are past. His triumph is accomplished. If we have suffered with Him, we can rejoice with Him. If we die to sin we shall rise to grace. Let us do so to-day. Let us bury our sins and our past life this day in the Sacrament of Penance, and prepare a fit sanctuary in our hearts for the reception of our Saviour in the blessed Eucharist to-morrow morning.

XXII. EASTER

BY DOM BERNARD HAYES, O.S.B.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Introduction.—The Resurrection, the true spring-time.
II. Easter is the feast of the Resurrection. (1) *It was heralded by prophets and by Christ.* (2) *It was witnessed to by the Apostles.* (3) *It is perpetually commemorated and preached to us by the Church in the liturgical feast of Easter.*
III. The feast of the Resurrection—Easter. (1) *The origin of the feast, a continuation of the Jewish Pasch.* (2) *The significance of the feast shown from:* (*a*) *Its type;* (*b*) *its liturgy.*
IV. Peroration.

I. "Easter," my dear brethren, means the Feast of April, the spring month, for, as St. Bede tells us, the old English Saxons used to call this month *Easter,* after one of their goddesses. And on this Easter day Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer rose from the tomb, a glorious Victor over sin and death. Is it not fitting, my dear brethren, that this glorious festival, which fills our souls with a new life of hope, always falls in the season of spring, which so beautifully symbolizes its mysteries? For winter came into the beautiful land of the souls of men. Darkness fell on their minds; the cold of unbelief froze the well-springs of their hearts; the wild storms of revolt swept away the barriers of restraint, and vice and every abomination as hungry wolves wandered unchecked, devouring the benighted travelers. As in the winter the sap of the trees sinks to the roots through every pore, and all the beautiful foliage withers and dies, so all the fair virtues planted and cared for by God died in men's hearts. Then came the promise of the Redeemer, and as the message of spring awakes the dead seeds within the earth, so the virtues sprang anew to life in the souls of men. Yes, my brethren, when Jesus rose from the dead victorious over sin and death, winter fled from those souls who shared in His Resurrection; the long darkness passed, hard hearts melted, storms of passion were stilled, and the souls of men, warmed by the Sun of the Resurrection, blossomed into a new life. Welcome to this spring-time of God! The spring-time of *nature,* beautiful as it is beyond description, is but a faint and unworthy copy of that true spring-time of the supernatural world brought to men by the triumph of Jesus Christ.

O, precious human souls! Listen to the words of your heavenly Spouse: "Behold, thy beloved speaketh to thee: 'Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come. For winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared, . . . the voice of the turtle is heard in our land . . . and the vines in flower yield their sweet smell. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come'" (Canticles ii, 19-21).

II. (1) As there are premonitions of the coming spring, so there were heralds of the future Resurrection during the long winter of God's displeasure. The holy King David, the inspired Psalmist of Israel, sings of Christ's future victory and triumph over death: "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup: it is Thou that wilt restore my inheritance unto me. . . . Therefore my heart hath been glad, and my tongue hath rejoiced: moreover, my flesh also shall rest in hope. Because Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; nor wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. xv). Isaias, the great prophet of the Messias, foretells that He "shall cast down death forever: and the Lord shall wipe away tears from every face" (Isa. xxiv, 8). And God gave a clear promise to His people by the prophet Osee: "I will deliver them out of the hand of death. I will redeem them from death. O, Death! I will be thy death, O, Hell! I will be thy bite" (Osee xiii, 14). And yet, again, in the Prophet Sophonias: "'Wherefore expect Me,' saith the Lord, in the day of My Resurrection that is to come'" (Sophonias iii, 8). And not only were the Prophets the heralds of the spring to come, for our divine Redeemer Himself foretold His Resurrection. You will remember, my brethren, that occasion when Jesus foretold His coming Passion to His Apostles and St. Peter "rebuked" Him for this word. The Gospel tells us "that from this time Jesus began to shew His disciples, that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things . . . and be put to death, and the third day rise again" (Matt. xvi, 21). Again, after His Transfiguration, Jesus descended the mountain with His disciples, and He charged them, saying: "Tell the vision to no man till the Son of Man be risen from the dead" (Matt. xvii, 9). And on that sad journey to Olivet after the Last Supper, Jesus said to the Apostles: "All you shall be scandalized in Me this night. . . . But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee" (Matt. xxvi, 31, 32). And you will remember, too, my brethren, that after Christ's death the chief priests came to Pilate, saying: "Sir, we have remembered that this seducer

said, while He was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Command, therefore, the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day: lest, perhaps, His disciples come and steal Him away, and say to the people: 'He is risen from the dead'; and the last error shall be worse than the first" (Matt. xxvii, 63-64).

(2) And Jesus did rise from the tomb as had been foretold. The glad news had to be announced to all men still in the shadow of the darkness of death. And so His followers became the witnesses of it to a wondering world. In the first shock of that dread tragedy when the Shepherd was slain and the sheep scattered, they seemed to have lost their faith in Jesus. They had seen Him dead upon the Cross; the jeer, "Himself He cannot save," had found no answer in their troubled hearts, and the tomb in the garden held all their former hopes of Him "who should have redeemed Israel." Their minds were too stunned to recall the words of prophecy and the promises of their Master. But their faith was not dead; it lay stunned for a time only, to wake to a new and stronger life. When the great event came to pass and Jesus stood in their midst greeting them as of yore with His "Peace be to you," first a dull wonder came upon them as comes to those who are awakened from sleep by something unexpected and startling; then terror, as if they saw a spirit; and then, as wonder and terror were changed to conviction, a thrill of joy and exultation, and renewed faith which never ceased to vibrate till their hearts were stilled by death. Their faith had passed into knowledge. He *was* the Messias, for He had risen from the dead. They went forth to proclaim the great news to the world. When the Holy Ghost had come upon the Apostles St. Peter stood forth boldly and preached, "Jesus of Nazareth . . . whom God had raised up, having loosed the sorrows of hell, as it was impossible that He should be holden by it" (Acts ii, 24). St. Paul hails Christ as the "first fruits of them that sleep," and tells the Corinthians: "If Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain; for you are yet in your sins. Then, they also who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If, in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable" (I. Cor. xv, 16 et seq.). We, my brethren, have not the advantage of those who "had seen and touched and handled the Word of Life." The remembrance of the Resurrection was the stimulus and consolation of their lives. It filled them with heroism, enabling them to face all labors, sufferings, and death itself. It explained the mystery of suffering, and they preached "Christ

crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Gentiles foolishness": for the Resurrection had taught them that the "foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (I. Cor. i, 23, 25). Do not *we* need the same help, my brethren? Does not *our* faith become dulled by the sadness of life and the seeming failure of Jesus Christ? Is it not hard to be filled with that joyous conviction which inspires with great generosity and overcomes all difficulties? Surely, my brethren, the remembrance of Christ's Resurrection and therefore of our own certain victory over sin and death, if we are disciples of Christ, is the thought above all others we should remember. This was the message of consolation carried by the Apostles to the sad and ruined world, to raise it up to renewed life and joy.

(3) It is this message which the Church has never ceased to preach. She has made it the very center of her wonderful liturgical life, and all her feasts and rites revolve around it, for it is by means of her festival of Easter that she each year recalls this great fact of the Resurrection.

II. I wish to show you, my dear brethren, how this feast originated, and then show you its significance from the liturgy which has grown up about it. For in this way does the Church continually preach the Resurrection of Christ and lift up the hearts of those who will listen to her.

(1) *Origin of Feast.*—There can be no doubt, my dear brethren, that the feast of Easter is the oldest feast of the Christian Church—in fact, it is as old as Christianity, and is the connecting link between the Old and the New Testaments. The Jewish festival of the Pasch continued to be kept by the Christians, but with a new signification. The Apostles, wishing to break with the Jewish Synagogue, decreed that Sunday, the first day of the week, the day on which our Lord rose from the tomb, should be the holy day—the Lord's day. Now, the feast of the Jewish Passover was kept on the fourteenth day of the March moon, which fell by turns on each day of the week. The Apostles, therefore, forbade the Christian Pasch to be celebrated on this day even should it be a Sunday, and ordered that it should everywhere be kept on the Sunday following. Ecclesiastical history in the early centuries resounds with disputes about the uniform celebration of the Easter festival. Thus we read of Pope St. Victor (188 A. D.) threatening the Eastern churches with excommunication if they do not conform to the Roman custom in this matter; the

Council of Nicæa (325 A. D.) decreed that all must conform and keep the feast on the Sunday following the fourteenth day of the March moon. In England, St. Bede tells us, that the British Christians and the Roman missionaries were kept apart in great measure by their differences concerning the time of celebrating Easter. What does all this show us, my brethren, except that the annual celebration of our Lord's Resurrection has been, by the Apostles themselves and by the Church, considered of the greatest importance for the spiritual welfare of the faithful?

2. (*a*) *The Type.*—But the connection between the Jewish festival of the Pasch and the Christian was also ideal. The feast of Easter gains a stronger significance from its connection with the feast of the Passover, which was its type and which it fulfilled. The Jewish feast of the Pasch was kept in memory of the miraculous deliverance of the chosen people from the bondage of Egypt. You will remember, my brethren, how God sent His destroying Angel to kill all the first-born in the land of Egypt; how that the Jews were commanded to mark their door-posts with the blood of the Paschal lamb which had been slain on the evening before; and how the Angel of death passed them by without touching their first-born. Was not this type fulfilled, my brethren, when "Christ, our Pasch, was sacrificed?" (I. Cor. v, 7). As the Jews killed the Paschal Lamb and afterwards tore it to pieces and ate it, and then found safety from death in its blood, so did His people kill Jesus, the Lamb of God, only to find that His Precious Blood won victory over death.

(*b*) *The Liturgy.*—We must next see, my brethren, how the liturgy of the Church eloquently preaches to men the lessons of the Resurrection, filling them with joyous conviction of Christ's victory over sin and death, and with the sure hope of their own victory over these enemies if they remain loyal to their Redeemer.

The long years before the coming of the Messias during which men's eyes looked anxiously for a Deliverer, are set forth by the Church in her penitential seasons of Advent and Lent. The drama of Redemption is strikingly represented in the liturgy of Holy Week. Those who follow the significant rites and inspired words by which the tragedy of Christ's death is commemorated during this week, are brought to Calvary and stand with broken hearts at the tomb of the dead Christ. To such souls the liturgy of Easter is in truth a resurrection. The great festival really commences in the liturgy

of Holy Saturday. In early times the Mass of this day was celebrated in the night preceding Easter Sunday, and for a thousand years it was not customary to offer the Holy Sacrifice on Saturday, during which the lifeless Body of Jesus lay in the tomb. By degrees the night Mass began to be anticipated, and was always considered to be in honor of the Resurrection; for the joy of the faithful who knew of Christ's triumph could no longer be restrained.

On Holy Saturday, by descriptive rites and beautiful words we are prepared to enter upon the glorious season of Easter. On Easter morning and during the whole of Paschal time, my brethren, the *Vidi aquam* is sung before the High Mass instead of the customary *Asperges;* for this is a time fruitful in graces, and the Church uses the words of the prophet Ezechiel to rouse us to appreciation and gratitude. "I saw water flowing from the right side of the temple, Alleluia; and all to whom that water came were saved, Alleluia." "Praise the Lord, because He is good: because His mercy endureth forever." What wonderful graces of Redemption flow from the Church of God for the healing of those who will partake of them! With gratitude should we recall at this time these graces which have done so much for us—the graces of baptism, by which we were freed from original sin, the grace of penance by which we have been restored to God's favor. True, indeed, are those beautiful words of the first Psalm: "The just man is planted by the rivers of water: he brings forth fruit in due season; his leaf withers not; and whatever he does, God makes to prosper." In the Introit of the Mass our Risen Saviour cries out to us: "I have risen and am as yet with you. Thou hast stretched forth thy hand to Me: thy knowledge is become wonderful!" The lessons, joys and events of this happy day are set forth for us in the words of the Mass. There St. Paul exhorts us to purge out the old leaven of malice and wickedness and to feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, for Christ, our Pasch, is sacrificed. The unleavened bread, commanded to be used by the Jews when they eat the Paschal lamb, was meant to teach them to abandon the *leaven* of their "malice and wickedness." Now that *our* Pasch is sacrificed, my brethren, may *we* during our lives ever feed our souls with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth! In the gradual we hear the glad tidings: "This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us be glad and rejoice therein." There follows a most beautiful sequence, the *Victimae paschali,* in which the victory of the Lamb is recorded and Mary Magdalen tells us what

she has seen at the sepulchre, and it ends up with a triumphant declaration of faith: "We know that Christ hath truly risen from the dead. Do Thou, O Conqueror and King! have mercy upon us!" The Gospel is the account of the Resurrection given by St. Mark. Perhaps, my brethren, these examples from the Liturgy of Easter, scant as they are, will show you how the Church of God preaches to this world of sin and death the great truth of the Resurrection. Is there any truth we need more in our own lives of temptation and sadness, during which the curse of death seems to be upon all we strive after and hope for? What encouraging lessons, what joy of heart, my brethren, may we not gain by listening to the voice of the Church, following her guidance and studying that wonderful setting forth of the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ in the liturgy? By following it we live the life of the Church; we gain the true Christian feeling for the Incarnation, and we are brought into close touch with Jesus Himself. During Paschal time, *i. e.*, from Easter to the end of Pentecost, we are kept with the Apostles. We are present when Jesus visits them during the forty days which He spent on earth before His ascension. We spend those ten days of preparation for Pentecost with Mary and the Apostles, and with them receive the crowning grace of the Incarnation, the Spirit whom Jesus sent to be our comforter.

May this great feast of our Lord's Resurrection be to all of us the "spring-time" of our souls! May a new life and energy awake within us! May the sun of His grace soften the frost which hardens the soil of our hearts and make to blossom forth the virtues of Christ! In one way only will this come to pass. St. Paul tells us: "For we are buried together with Him by baptism unto death: that, as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. vi, 4, 5).

Let us, then, my brethren, one and all be roused from sin and tepidity to this "newness of life." The glory of the future resurrection of our souls and our bodies shines about us, at this time, to encourage us to go through the days of our passion. We all have our cross to carry through life; we must all die to ourselves and to our passions. When the cross presses heavily, let us recall the glory of the Resurrection Day and gain new hope and patience from

the sure faith, so persistently taught by Jesus Christ, His Apostles and His Church, that we, who suffer with Christ and descend to the tomb with Him, shall rise in glory to share the joys of those who, "having been planted in the likeness of His death, are also in the likeness of His resurrection."

XXIII. PASCHAL TIME

BY RIGHT REV. JOHN S. VAUGHAN, D.D., BISHOP OF SEBASTOPOLIS

"Arise, my dove and come. Winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land. The voice of the turtle is heard, the fig-tree put forth her green figs. The vines in flower, yield their sweet smell. Arise thou, and come."—Canticle of Cant ii, 10-13.

SYNOPSIS.—God is the author of Nature as well as of Grace. Consequently, a striking analogy exists between the natural and the supernatural. As the natural year has its times and its seasons, so has the ecclesiastical. In the joys and delights of spring, and in the freshness and newness of life of that season, we see reflected the Alleluias and the general elevation of the soul to God in the spiritual order. As Christmas and the Epiphany and Lent, and, above all, the bitter winter of Holy Week gradually unfold, we pass into the joyous season of Easter, to hear, with grateful hearts, that "The winter is now past, and that the voice of the turtle is again heard in the land," etc. We must attune our own minds in harmony with the season and fill our hearts with gratitude and thanksgiving for the favors received. "Rejoice in the Lord, and again, I say, rejoice." We must see in the splendors of Our Lord's resurrection the promise and the example of our own. But to share in His glory, we must share in the holiness, the purity, the humility, and the penance of His. His sufferings and death will be of no service—on the contrary—they will render us more guilty, unless we cooperate with the grace purchased for us by His Passion. In the things of this life we realize the truth of the principle "if we wish the end, we must absolutely make use of the means." It is imperative that this same principle be applied to the things of the future life also. Though to serve God is a duty, apart from all considerations of reward, yet He has made it easy by promising eternal riches to all who "Take up their cross daily and follow Him." The road to heaven is "narrow and straight," but it is the only road that leads to eternal life. Then, whatever it may cost us, let us bravely and loyally follow it.

God is as truly the author of nature as of grace, so it is not surprising that we often find a strong analogy between the one and the other. Indeed, the Church, who is taught of God, is constantly employing earthly methods and usages, even when striving to inculcate her heavenly doctrines and to lift us up to a sense of better things. Thus, in order to teach us more effectually the history of our Lord's life, and to keep before our minds more vividly the great truths of our religion, she divides the year into periods and seasons, so that we pass in due order and without precipitation from doctrine to doctrine and from mystery to mystery, almost as we might do in the scenes of a play.

Just as the natural year is divided into spring, summer, autumn and winter, so the ecclesiastical year is divided in a similar way. And as each of the divisions of the natural year affects us differently, and evokes within us different feelings and emotions, so is it likewise with the divisions of the liturgical year.

The period upon which we are about to enter now and which we speak of as Paschal Time, or Eastertide, corresponds to the most beautiful season of the natural year. That is to say, to the sweet-scented spring, when all nature awakens from her long winter sleep, and, shaking herself free from the trammels in which the cold death-like winter has so long bound her, clothes herself with beauty as with a garment.

The desolate fields and pastures now grow green again with fresh-formed grass; the naked trees and shrubs hang out again their myriad glossy leaves; the frozen streams and mountain torrents flow with renewed vigor through the land; the air is full of song, and thousands of living things arise from earth and air and water, to begin a life of natural joy. All nature is gay and joyous. The snow, which but a few months ago seemed to cling round mountain and valley, as a winding sheet about the limbs of a corpse, has disappeared, and the dead dull earth has arisen to life once more. In the midst of this general renovation of all things, with every object around us fresh and young and palpitating with life, we forget the severity of the days now passed, and the cold frosts, and piercing winds, and chilly penetrating showers of the dark and dismal season. All we are conscious of now are the scented air, the bright sunshine, the song of birds, the hum of insects, the warm breezes and the clear blue skies above our heads.

Well! It is something analagous to this that the Church would have us feel, in the supernatural order, at the season of Easter.

"The winter is now past, and the rain is over and gone." Yes; we have celebrated Christmas and the Epiphany, and have passed through the forty days of Lent, during which we were required to deny ourselves, and to satisfy for sin and past indulgence by deeds of penance and fasting.

We, then, lived in an atmosphere of cloud and storm, of sorrow and shame, and heartfelt repentance as we weighed and pondered over with dismay and horror the truly appalling consequences of our innumerable transgressions. We listened to the admonitions of holy Church, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God,"

and "rend your hearts and not your garments, and do penance, for the Kingdom of God is at hand." Then, as the weeks of Lent rolled slowly by, with their continual fasts and abstinences, their ferial offices and mournful liturgy, we passed on at last into Holy Week itself.

Then the Sacred Person of our divine Lord becomes the very center of attention as we see Him entering upon the sorrowful Way of the Cross. We contemplate Him clothed in the rags of our fallen humanity, ready to atone in person for our sins and the sins of all the world.

We watch Him, firstly, as He enters triumphantly into Jerusalem amid the shouts and hosannahs of the multitudes, who waved their palm branches and olive branches in testimony of their joy, and spread out their garments before Him. And then, but a few days later, we note the fickleness of the crowd and their altered demeanor, as He is seized and bound and led through the noisy streets, to be tried for sedition and for treason before the judgment-seats of Pilate, Caiphas and Herod.

And slowly, as the days go by, the Church continues to pursue the same theme, and presents for our consideration, one by one, the various stages of the sacred Passion. All joyousness and hilarity have disappeared from the liturgy; the music is solemn and severe, the churches are dark and desolate, and the very pictures and images are hidden by purple veils, so that the eyes of all should be riveted on "the Man of Sorrow" and on the details of His dolorous Way of the Cross.

With contrite hearts and sorrowful minds we turn our thoughts inward and contemplate the enormity of sin—of our own personal sin—by the light of the sufferings and death of our Saviour. We witness the insults and humiliations so patiently endured; we listen to the sharp impact of the scourges as they strike the trembling flesh of the Son of God; we see the crown of thorns plaited and then pressed upon His sacred brow, till the Precious Blood pours down in streams and mingles with the spittle which the brutal soldiers have already vomited into His face, the most beautiful among the sons of men.

And so, with ever-deepening emotion and with a keener and keener sense of the malignity of sin, we follow the divine Victim as He is loaded with His Cross, and hounded along up the rocky and precipitous pass on His way to Calvary.

We see Him fall again and again from weakness, exhaustion, and loss of blood, amid the insults and blasphemies of the crowd; then, rising and struggling on, till at last with infinite difficulty He reaches the summit, where He is to suffer. We gaze, in spirit, into His calm, resolute, generous face; we see how deep is His compassion and love for poor, sinful man, and how determined He is to leave nothing undone that may help Him to break with sin, and to win everlasting life. He looks on unmoved as He sees the Cross flung on the ground and the soldiers prepare their hammers and nails, for He longs to sacrifice Himself and to endure the agony and the ignominy of the Cross, that He may save us from a still worse fate.

We hold our breath as we behold Him, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, rudely stripped of His garments and then thrown down upon the hard wood of the Cross, while the executioners drive the iron through the flesh and muscles and sinews of His hands and feet. The innocent Lamb of God; the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world, is now watering the earth with His saving Blood. At last, high above the heads of the surging crowd, is lifted the Cross with the divine Victim fastened upon it. And there, suspended between heaven and earth He prays for His sinful creatures and offers up his life to His eternal Father in expiation of their crimes. Every gaping wound, every aching limb, every straining muscle, yea, every single drop of blood, more valuable than a thousand worlds, appeal for mercy and compassion on the fallen race.

Yes, my brethren, on last Good Friday we took our stand with the Blessed Virgin, and St. John, and the holy women at the foot of the Cross. We listened to the Gospel narrative as it was plaintfully sung by the choir, and we watched the gradual passing away of Him who consented to die a temporal death, that we might live eternally. How sincerely we sorrowed over our faults; how truly our hearts were wrung with grief, especially when we beheld Him in His last agony; and, above all, when we listened to Him crying out with a loud voice, "It is consummated," just before He bowed His Head and died.

But such deep humiliation and such utter ignominy could not last, and we were soon relieved from the painful strain of such a sight. The poor human body so cruelly mangled and torn and "bruised for our iniquities" was, after all, the body of Him who rules and reigns eternally, and over whom death has no dominion. Though

taken down as a helpless and powerless thing from the Cross, and though laid like any ordinary corpse in the obscurity and darkness of the tomb, it remained ever united to the divinity, and on Easter day was destined to rise by virtue of that divine power, glorious, immortal, and impassible. Thus, the spiritual winter that lay upon our souls, the sorrow and the anguish that seemed to freeze our very blood and to numb our very faculties, were soon to give place to a brighter and more blessed experience.

For, with the dawn of Easter day, came the glad tidings that "the winter was now past, and the rain was over and gone, and the flowers had again appeared in the land." For He whom we all mourned as dead has risen again. The mangled form of the Son of God has broken through the cords of death and has appeared beautiful, luminous, and glorious. "Christ dieth now no more: death hath no more dominion over Him."

Instead of weeping women, bright-eyed angels guard His tomb and cry in gladsome tones: "He is risen, He is not here!" Well may the whole Church take up those soul-stirring words. Well may she uncover her images and pictures and ring her joy-bells in every church, and chant her "Gloria in excelsis Deo," and shout her allelulias and her hymns of praise.

And now her long solemn offices are shortened and her liturgy takes on a more joyous tone; her priests are clothed with white or gold, and her bare sanctuaries are once more brilliant with the choicest flowers of spring. The fasts are over and instead of doing penance for sin and covering herself with sack-cloth and ashes, her whole mind is given up, without let or hindrance, to praising and glorifying Him who has conquered sin and death and has thrown open the gates of heaven anew to those who will follow His lead and walk in His footsteps.

As all nature renews its life in the spring, so all Christians enter upon a newness of life at Easter, the spring-time of the Christian Church. "As we have died with Christ," urges the apostle, "so let us rise again with Him." And as Christ dieth now no more, so neither should we return again to the death of sin for which we have atoned during Lent and Passion Week, and from which we have now been rescued and absolved by the Sacrament of His love.

The holy Fathers of the Church exhort us to look upon the fifty days between Easter and Pentecost as the image of our eternity of joy in heaven. The holy longings of Advent, the sweet consola-

tions of Christmas, the severe truths of Septuagesima, the contrition and penance of Lent, and the heart-rending sight of the Passion, all are given us as preliminaries and introductions to the sublime and glorious Pasch. Even the feasts of the saints which were interrupted during the whole of Holy Week, so that we might concentrate our attention on the sufferings of the world's Redeemer, are likewise excluded from the first eight days of Easter, so that we might think only of Him whose glory eclipses every other; but, these eight days once passed, we have the saints' feast celebrated again in rich abundance. They stand as bright constellations around the divine Sun of Justice, Jesus Christ.

If holiness of life be a duty, even apart from any recompense that attaches to it, it has certainly been rendered easier by the promises that God has gratuitously connected with it, and of which, indeed, it is the purpose of Easter to remind us.

We see in the resurrection of our Lord a pledge and a proof of our own resurrection to a life of glory. "For, if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is vain, and you are yet in your sins" (I. Cor. xv, 17). But since we know with absolute certainty that He has opened a way to heaven for us, we have the same confidence that we also shall one day ascend there too, and share His glory, unless, indeed, we forfeit all claim by rebelling against Him. Not that all shall be equal even there, for St. Paul explains that as star differeth from star, so shall the just differ from one another in heaven. "One is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars." But we shall all "put on immortality when death shall be swallowed up in victory" (I. Cor. xv). "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the blast of the trumpet the dead shall rise again incorruptible"; and this glorious consummation is wholly "due to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I. Cor. xv, 57), to whom be honor and glory forever.

And what practical consequences ought we to draw from so sublime and consoling a doctrine, and with what resolutions should it inspire us? Dear brethren, the apostle to the Gentiles supplies us with an answer in the very next verse. "Therefore," he writes, "my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I. Cor. xv, 58). Let us develop and amplify these inspired words a little.

The Passion, death, and glorious resurrection of our blessed Lord into heaven will do us little good, unless we fulfil our share of the contract and cooperate with the grace that is given us. It is not enough to form resolutions and to *begin* to give ourselves to God. We must be, as St. Paul says, "steadfast and immovable" in carrying them out. How many men there are who, under the impulse of sudden emotion, or else urged by some special appeal, begin to lead a life of closer union with God, but who nevertheless relax their efforts so soon as the emotion has passed away. It is very easy to begin; the difficulty is to continue: yet only "he who persevereth to the end shall be saved." "To him that persevereth unto death I will give the crown of life."

We have the grandest and the most magnificent reward offered us: a reward so sublime and so immense that even God Himself would not offer us anything greater or more priceless, for the reward is no other than God Himself. "Behold, I am thy reward exceeding great."

But if we are, indeed, to take possession of it, it is imperative that we should walk in the footsteps of our King, and model our life upon His. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

Multitudes of men would be willing to accept the prize of eternal life if there were nothing to pay for it, and if they could secure it without any trouble or self-denial. But—heaven is not for cowards! The faint-hearted, irresolute and vaccilating, who yield to every temptation and know not how to deny themselves in anything, are hurrying along a road that leads not to heaven, but to a very different place.

If we sincerely wish to share in the happiness and glory of the risen Saviour, we must absolutely make up our minds to break altogether with sin, and to lead a life in complete conformity with His. For only on these conditions shall we succeed. In all matters of business, and in all worldly pursuits, we fully acknowledge that IF WE WANT THE END, WE MUST MAKE USE OF THE MEANS. It is only when eternity and our spiritual welfare is at stake that we think this principle may be set aside. But, "be not deceived, God is not mocked"; unless we follow the road that leads to heaven, and that has been pointed out to us by God, we shall certainly never get there; and that road is the road of the Holy Cross.

It is a road which is described by our Lord as both "narrow and

strait," because it is a road that is hemmed in by the commandments of God on the one side, and by the precepts and regulations of the Church on the other. Unless we are to fall over into the abyss, we must continually keep within these limits. "No man can serve two masters." If he follows the promptings of his fallen nature, if he listens to the voice of passion, of lust, of worldly interest, and of earthly satisfactions, he wanders off the true road that leads to heaven. He must, therefore, make up his mind one way or the other, and not imagine that he can obey God and the world at the same time; nor that he may reach eternal bliss while treading the downward path that ends in the bottomless pit. Surely, the eternal happiness of a life with God in the realms of cloudless bliss is worth some sacrifice. Surely, with the example of our divine Master to inspire us, we shall be ready to sacrifice the delights of time, such as they are! for those of eternity? Surely, we have reason and sense enough left to prefer the substance to the shadow, the eternal to the temporal, and the everlasting to the perishable. Then, be of good heart and resolve by the divine assistance to tread under foot all rebellious appetites, and to rise to a life of closer and closer union with God for the future. "The first man (Adam) was of the earth, earthly: the second man (Jesus Christ) was of heaven, heavenly. . . . Therefore, as we have borne the image of the earthly (by reason of our sins), so let us now (by the avoidance of sin) bear the image of the heavenly" (I. Cor. xv, 47-49). With these words of the great St. Paul I bring my exhortation to an end, hoping it may fall on attentive ears.

XXIV. THE FORTY-HOURS' ADORATION

BY THE REV. FRANCIS M. HARVEY

"I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the house of the Lord."

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—The Forty Hours' Adoration most impressive: First, because of the Exposition; second, because of the Liturgy.
I. The Forty Hours a Prayer for Peace.
II. Origin of the Forty Hours in its present form.
III. The Ceremonies.—The Mass of Exposition; the Procession; the Enthronement. The second day. The Mass for Peace; the use of the side altar; the color of the vestments, etc. The third day. The Mass of Reposition; the Procession.
Conclusion.—Our duty towards our Liturgy.

Few devotions have so deeply impressed the faithful and been the occasion of such striking graces as the Forty-Hours' Adoration. More than any other form of devotion it has aroused the olden enthusiasm for God's service; the enthusiasm that filled the soul of the poet-king of Israel when he exclaimed, "I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the house of the Lord."

This is due primarily, of course, to the exposition of the most blessed Sacrament, and the forceful bringing home to us of the presence of our eucharistic God in our midst; but the liturgical splendor of the service, its wealth of ceremonial pomp, are assuredly great sources of grace, as the Church intends they should be.

The Forty-Hours' Adoration is principally a prayer for peace—peace for the Church, peace for the world, peace in our own hearts, the peace that passeth understanding. And so we may regard it as a truce between the things of the spirit and the things of the world; between our nobler nature and the cares that annoy us; a time when all our enemies are driven back and we are all allowed to gain strength from the very treasury of heaven; a bright interspace of peace and rest, when we may draw nearer the Shepherd of our souls, and see with clearer vision, with eyes less troubled and less clouded, the Face of our Father in heaven. It should be to us what Elim was to the weak and wayworn Israelites as they rested beneath its

spreading palms; the crystal fountain at which we may quench the soul's thirst for all high and holy things, amid the burning sands of this earthly desert, amid the dust and brambles of daily anxieties and daily cares.

We are not now to consider our Lord enthroned in Majesty during the Adoration of the Forty Hours, but to turn our attention to the liturgical teachings that the Church offers for our instruction and our edification.

As said before, the Forty-Hours' Adoration is a prayer for peace, and though the Forty-Hours' prayer is traced back to the early part of the thirteenth century, yet its present form we owe to a Capuchin friar, Fr. Joseph de Ferano of Milan.

In 1535 the duchy of Milan, its ducal family having become extinct, placed itself in the hands of Emperor Charles V. The King of France objected to this on the ground that he had a claim, in virtue of a marriage between a member of the ducal family and his great-grandfather. As a result, war was declared upon the duchy of Milan.

It was the beginning of the Lenten season when the people of Milan, who had scarcely recovered from the effects of a dread pestilence that had carried off over forty thousand a few years before, found themselves face to face with war and all the horrors that follow in its train. At that time Father Joseph was preaching a Lenten course in the cathedral. His sanctity even more than his eloquence attracted large numbers of people, and he took advantage of this great opportunity to fulfil a desire he had long deeply cherished, namely, to establish a devotion in honor of the Passion of our Lord.

The Forty-Hours' Prayer had long been known in Milan, but Father Joseph aimed at giving it a slightly different form and wished, above all, to make it continuous by enlisting the cooperation of every parish church in Milan. He explained his plan to the people, assured them that it was the best means of disarming God's anger, and ventured to promise that if they followed his advice earnestly and piously, the war which they so greatly dreaded would be averted.

The citizens, their hope revived by the words of the man of God, pledged themselves to observe the Forty Hours for the entire year, the Blessed Sacrament being exposed in one church after another throughout the city. The first service was held in the

cathedral itself, which was magnificently adorned, and the people thronged it for forty hours together. From church to church it passed, orderly crowds following, often in procession, and the earnest supplications of the people arose incense-like before the enthroned King. The war-cloud gathered black and lowering upon the horizon, and the people were tossed between fear of the dread scourge and hope of some supernatural intervention. At the moment when the storm threatened to burst upon them in all its fury, these two deadly enemies, Charles V and Francis I, became suddenly friendly and desirous of peace. They signed a truce for six months, and the French army retired from Milan.

The city rang with joy and thanksgiving at this unexpected withdrawal of the armed force. Before the year of the Forty Hours was completed the two monarchs concluded a definite treaty of peace. The citizens of Milan unanimously decreed, as an act of thanksgiving to God and in memory of their miraculous deliverance, to continue the Forty-Hours' Devotion in the form in which it had been instituted forever. Milan has kept her promise, and the devotion in that beautiful form is now the common heritage of all Christendom.

It was later that the idea of expiating during the Forty Hours for the sins of the world, particularly those committed during the carnival season, was added, and to-day we should assist at our Forty Hours by beseeching the Prince of Peace to bestow on the Church and on ourselves His supreme gift, and we should also offer our acts of love and protestations of devotion to expiate for the blasphemies of so many of our fellow mortals and try to win for them the grace of a change of heart.

Yet, to fully enter into the Devotion of the Forty Hours, we must follow intelligently and understandingly the Liturgy of this beautiful service.

The Church and Altar, in preparation for the feast, are decked with the utmost magnificence, for, if a visiting potentate deigned to honor our home with his presence, we would deem no ornament too costly, no effort too great to express our sense of obligation. The Lord of heaven and earth demands no less at our hands. The service opens with a solemn Mass, at which the Host that is to be venerated during the exposition is consecrated. This consecrating of a special host symbolizes to us that our eucharistic God is coming to us in a special capacity; He is not only our Saviour and our God,

our daily Food for the nourishing of our souls, but the King coming to hear the petitions of His subjects, the Dispenser of all spiritual gifts, which He will give more freely at this "acceptable time."

At the close of the Mass, the Sacred Host is placed in the remonstrance, the priest lays aside the chasuble, and is vested in the cope, signifying that if we wear the mantle of charity here we shall be clothed with the glorious immortality of our bodies hereafter. The Sacred Host is then incensed, the first act of homage to our King, and the celebrant receives the remonstrance into his hands. This is the signal for the procession, one of the principal ceremonies in the devotion of the Forty Hours, the first official liturgical prayer of the devotion. We must realize that such a procession is in itself a solemn prayer. It is an outward expression, not only of the lips but of the whole body, of our faith in God, confidence in His power to help us and in His willingness to do so, as well as a manifestation of our love. Lights are borne in the procession, to signify that we should take care to let the light of a Christian life, the light of good works, shine out in the darkness of the world, and that such light should be found ever regulated and orderly along the path marked out by Christ and His Church.

But the procession is also something other than a prayer—it is an instruction. It goes forth from the sanctuary, and to the sanctuary it returns; so the endless procession of humanity comes forth from God as their first beginning, and returns to Him, their last end. Those in the procession walk at the quiet guarded pace set by the cross-bearer, who leads. So should the Christian walk soberly and justly along the path that the Crucified has trod; so should their lips forever sing the Canticles of the holy men and women who have gone before; so should they drop from their fingers, in honor of their Saviour and their God, the fair flowers of noble deeds and kindly thoughts that brighten and make fragrant the dark and noisesome passages of this world. The procession returns, still headed by the cross, that is placed within the sanctuary. This should remind us that, as the Son of Man came forth from God, so He returns to the bosom of His Father, leading after Him those who have received the adoption of sons of God, who have cleansed their souls in the waters of penance and followed Him loyally and faithfully through the devious paths of human life.

The procession began with the offering of incense to the Lord of Hosts; it closes with a like offering, reminding us that every work,

every undertaking in life should be preceded by prayer, and should be so conducted that at its close we may again kneel before our God and with unstained heart offer our thanksgiving for His guidance, or at least present the plea of sorrow for our faults.

And now the Sacred Host is enthroned; the audience chamber of the Most High is thrown open, and the priest, in the name of the Church and the assembled faithful, presents the solemn petitions of the Litany.

And here we should consider what a blessed heritage is ours in this sacred Litany. We are not left to the mercy of one man's feeble utterance, dictated by the narrow limits of his own character, marred by the poverty or earthiness of his own mind. No, ours are the most sublime outpourings of the wants that the long-suffering and the long experience of humanity have taught us to feel and to know. We are not left to the weak and possibly mistaken petitions of our own private prayers, but our mind and hearts are attuned to the Will of our eternal Father by the majestic petitions, the exalted pleas that are embodied in our Litany. Those prayers rose from the heart and flowed from the lips of men whose lives never knew the corroding poison of worldly anxiety and petty cares, but "whose virgin souls lived in the purple dawn of Christian enthusiasm in the early glow of Christian love." These, and such prayers as these, had their birth in their hearts of our forefathers in the faith, who breathed them in dungeons and in catacombs; the martyrs voiced their adoration in such words as they raised their eyes from the torturing rack, or lifted their hands from the quivering flames. And so the Litany comes to us freighted with the sorrows and the triumphs of all the Christian centuries, fraught, too, with the message of hope for sinners, recognizing that we are all, without distinction, saints and sinners alike, children of a loving, merciful Father. There, as one common family, united at the foot-stool of the Omnipotent, we pour out in the same voice our petitions for pardon, strength and grace, holding in our hands the golden censer of the Church's Litanies, the golden censer tried since the early days of the Church in "the sevenfold fires of affliction," from which rise, like richest incense, the supplications of God's saints, supplications, which, by the power of the Church, are our very own. No prayer since time was is comparable in majesty, devotion and true piety to the great Litany of the Church. We should follow its petitions carefully, strive to enter into the spirit of every supplication,

that we may obtain a true outlook upon our daily life, its needs and its wants, and readjust our attitude more nearly to the Will of our Father in heaven.

After this "sigh," as it has been called, " of the Church on earth to her Sister in heaven," the clergy retire without any closing ceremony, for they have but started the adoration and impetration, which are to continue till the Forty Hours are completed. The more personal, private devotion of the faithful now commences, but they are not to forget that they, too, are "kings and priests," and that it is theirs to pray for the Church of which they are an integral part, theirs to offer to the Eternal Father the only begotten Son, who comes into their hearts in holy Communion that they may offer Him, theirs to win pardon for sinners and grace for the just; theirs, in a word, to take up the burden of Christ, the burden of praying for the sins of the world, that they may thus enter more fully into His spirit, thus unite themselves more perfectly to Him.

On the second day of the Forty Hours the Mass for Peace is sung, not at the Altar of Exposition, unless circumstances make it necessary, for the audience is to be uninterrupted, but at a side altar, since we who so sadly need "the peace that the world cannot give" are yet in exile, calling from afar to the Holy One enthroned in the Bosom of the Father. The Mass itself is most penitential in character. The vestments are violet in color, signifying that it is by penance, by the crucifixion of the flesh and its lusts that true peace is to be gained. The color is to remind us, too, of Him who was clothed in the purple of His own Blood, and thus gained for us the eternal peace of heaven: "By His stripes we are healed." There is neither Gloria nor Credo, for joy as expressed in the Gloria would not harmonize with the sorrow-stricken petition, nor would the triumph, which is symbolized by the Credo, be fitting. All is subdued and sorrowful, and at the close the deacon does not chant the *"Ite, Missa est,"* "Depart, Mass is finished," but reverently, turned towards the Altar, sings *"Benedicamus Domino,"* "Let us bless the Lord," for our prayers are now to be continuous, and we should not depart until our supplications have been heard.

During the second day, as on the first, we come to pray for our own needs, spiritual and temporal; for our fallen brethren; for those who are laboring especially in the Lord's vineyard; for the exaltation of holy Church; for our Supreme Pontiff. We are to pray, too, for deliverance from all calamity and distress; pray that

His goodly gifts of holiness, peace, and final perseverance may be bestowed upon us.

And then, in the words of Cardinal Wiseman, we should "never think of rising from before Him without thanking Him from our hearts for this miraculous institution of His power and goodness, this sweetest pledge of His love. Adore Him now again as the Treasure of your souls, the Food of life, the living Bread that cometh down from heaven. Speak to Him of the kindness, the self-abasement, which He here exhibits; of the untiring affection for poor man which He displays in bearing with so much coldness, ingratitude, and even sacrilege, as this blessed memorial of His death exposes Him to; of the still more incomprehensible excess of love, which He communicates Himself daily to us, frail and sinful creatures, as our food, and thus brings our very hearts and souls into contact with His! And offer Him your humble tribute of reverence and love, in reparation and atonement for those scoffs, contradictions and blasphemies, to which He has long been and is daily subject in His adorable Sacrament."

Full of significance is the ceremonial of the third day, the closing exercises of this great devotion. To-day the Mass is sung at the Altar of Exposition, to show that we may confidently hope that our prayers and our penitential exercises—above all, our reception of the saving Sacrament of Penance—have fully reconciled us to our God; and that we may now come, clad in the white habiliments of joy, and, in His very Presence, present our Offering, His only begotten Son. At the end of the Mass the procession again forms as on the first day, for our farewell, like our greeting, calls forth our most solemn and most formal protestations. He descends from His Throne, where for forty hours He has listened to our petitions and breathed the incense of our adoration and our love, and journeys with us around the sacred edifice, thus promising that while we are faithful to the dispositions aroused in us by the Devotion of the Forty Hours, He will be our constant companion. He returns again to the sanctuary, signifying that at the close of life's journey He will bring us safe to our heavenly home, where His blessing will rest upon us for all eternity and constitute for us the bliss of heaven, for that blessing is none other than Himself.

The Litany is not repeated at the close of this procession, for this is the time for fulfilment, not of petition, but after the prayer in honor of the Eucharist is chanted, the special aid of our Immaculate

Mother is added to help us to profit by the graces that have been bestowed upon us; the welfare of holy Church is again recommended to Him, intercession is made for heretics, and His blessing is invoked upon the living and the dead. Finally, benediction is given, and with the saving sign He passes to the seclusion of the tabernacle, and our hearts are bright with the brightness that shone from the face of Moses as he came down from the holy mount.

Such is the simple explanation of some of the liturgical beauties of this great Devotion. Cherish them; let each ceremony speak eloquently to you, for there is a grace from God in each and every one, a message from the Most High, that, if listened to, will guide you up, closer and closer to the Throne of God Himself. "They that seek after the Lord take notice of all things."

XXV. THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION AND THE FEAST OF THE CORPUS CHRISTI

BY THE REV. JOHN W. SULLIVAN

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Places of the Feasts in the Liturgy.

I. The connection between them. (a) One, the end of Christ's visible, the other, the beginning of His invisible, ministry. (b) Natural love for Christ and trust in Him before the Ascension—supernatural love and faith through the Eucharist. Taken from the touch of sense He is given to the touch of Faith.

II. Ascension—(a) When celebrated. (b) An old liturgical observance. (c) The liturgical symbol is the extinguishing of the Paschal candle. (d) Mass, Introit, Collect, Epistle and Gospel, Preface, etc. (e) Antiquity of the feast and its spread throughout the Church.

III. Corpus Christi—(a) Its introduction by Pope Urban IV, 1264—reason for it. (b) Corpus Christi and Ascension. (c) Mass, Introit, Epistle, Gospel, Gradual, Sequence. (d) Procession.

IV. Fidelity to our blessed Lord in the holy Eucharist, is a guarantee that we shall be with Him in His second Ascension to heaven.

These two feasts hold prominent places in the liturgy of the Church. Both are movable feasts of the first class with octaves. The former coming Thursday forty days after Easter, and the latter being celebrated on the Thursday following Trinity Sunday. Both had been kept as days of obligation in this country until Corpus Christi was stricken from the list by the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, owing to the inconveniently large number of such days already observed. These statements might, for the most part, be applied to other days on the Church's calendar. There seems, at first blush, to be no liturgical connection between the Ascension and Corpus Christi more than that which exists between the usual solemnities in honor of our Lord. An examination, however, of the ceremonies observed on the one occasion and of the prayers used on the other, will show a striking and intimate relationship between the two.

The most striking liturgical observance peculiar to the festival of the Ascension is that, after the reading of the gospel at the High Mass, the Paschal candle, which up to then has been burned at all the High Masses since Easter Sunday, is extinguished and put aside. The characteristic of the prayers, hymns and antiphons composed by St. Thomas Aquinas for the Feast of Corpus Christi

is that they give an exposition of the doctrine of the Eucharist of Christ's hidden life in the Blessed Sacrament. The extinguishing of the Paschal candle after the gospel on Ascension day is typical of the end of Christ's visible mission on earth; the hymns and canticles, the prayers and lessons for Corpus Christi indicate the beginning of Christ's invisible mission among the sons of men. The Paschal candle, like Christ on earth, was the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night; it disappears with the Ascension, for the children of Christ, the Leader, have now entered into the promised land through Christ's victory over sin and death, into the "feast of fat things" prepared for them in the Eucharist. The light of the Paschal candle is snuffed out as Christ, ascending amid the throngs of rejoicing angels, is shut from the view of His beloved Apostles and Disciples by clouds radiant with the reflected splendor of the flaming seraphim and the burning cherubim; and in the Eucharist Christ is still surrounded by the heavenly spirits, breaking again and again into song—a song ever fresh and yet ever the same, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory," by the seraphim with wing-veiled faces contemplating and worshiping Him, but from the view of His loving disciple He is shut by the clouds of the sacramental veil. Heretofore He stood in person by dying beds; He saw faces flushed with fever and drawn with paralysis, He knew what hunger and thirst meant. He passed through the hard apprenticeship of life that made Him the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. That visible ministry, those personal ministrations ceased with the Ascension and have given place to the invisible ministry, to the sacramental ministrations of Christ in the most holy Sacrament.

The Master had said to His Apostles before leaving them, "It is expedient for you that I go." Here we have a further connection between the two festivals. Only by His leaving them could the souls of His disciples be delivered from that earthly affection for the Lord, which made impossible to them their duly welcoming that spiritual presence which was yet truly richer in blessings for them than even His bodily presence abiding with them had been. St. Gregory tells us that because the disciples, whilst they beheld the Lord in the flesh, thirsted so much to see Him always with their bodily eyes, the words, "If I go not, the Paraclete will not come," are spoken to them as if He had said openly to them, "Unless I withdraw from you My body, I show you not the love of the Spirit,

and unless you cease to behold Me in the body, you will never learn to love Me spiritually." Those words pointed to the breaking off of the old conditions of intercourse, and the substitution of others of a more spiritual nature. His departure aided in the apprehension of His true character and nature. The star that lies low on the horizon and is shrouded by mist may be mistaken for some earth-born light, but is known for what it is as it climbs the sky, so He was discerned when unseen, far better than when here in the flesh. When He ascended to the Father, that withdrawal from the touch of sense gave Him to the touch of faith, and these desolate disciples were nearer Him when the cloud received Him out of their sight than they had ever been when they saw Him with their eyes and handled with their hands the Word of Life. The old clinging loyalty of their love and trust had sublimed into a more spiritual affection and faith. The true personal bond that knits men to Christ is actually helped by His physical absence and His sacramental presence. "Jesus Christ, whom, having seen not, ye love and ye believe, is held in the inmost hearts of millions. He departed for a season that we might receive Him forever." The Divine method takes us beyond our common selves. For us the importunate urgency of the present overpowers alike the past and the future; but God trains us to realize the unseen. It was expedient for the disciples that the Lord should go away. Their knowledge of Him was transformed into faith in Him. Jesus, ascended, has come to His millions of children; Jesus, ascended, has been the meat and the drink of fainting, struggling disciples for the past twenty centuries. The great personal loss for the bereaved Apostles has been a nobler gain and a larger life for them and their successors.

The feast of the Ascension is celebrated on the fortieth day after the Resurrection. On that day the Church militant unites with Church triumphant in celebrating the triumphs of Her Spouse. The office of the day breathes the sweetest joy over this final triumph of Christ and His glorious return to the bosom of His Father. The characteristic liturgical observance of the day until well on in the Middle Ages was a procession. And that custom shows how deeply people were moved by the desire to imitate, as far as possible, in the introduction of liturgical practises, the actions of our Lord. So, in this case, the determining factor was that our Lord had led His disciples out of the city to the Mount of Olives. The liturgical symbol of the Feast is the Paschal candle; first lighted on the night

of the Resurrection, it is to remind us by its forty-days' presence of the time Jesus spent among the disciples. But now the gospel has been sung, and its words remind us that Jesus has gone, "The Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven." The sacred symbol of Jesus' presence now becomes a symbol of His departure. His forty days with the Apostles were days of light and brightness, cheer and encouragement to them; and then the cold blank, when they returned to Jerusalem, for He, their life, their light, their sun was there no longer to receive them. This is what the extinguishing of the Paschal candle recalls: it gives a touch of sadness to the spirit of joyous triumph. There is the assurance in the Introit, taken from the angel's words, that He will come again as "ye have seen Him ascending." The Collect begs the grace that as He now sits at the right hand of the Father, so our desires be there with Him. And then, by one of the rare exceptions, we find the event commemorated and described in the Epistle. We are with the happy group on Olivet; we hear the words of Jesus; we see the angels and we receive the blessing of the Master. Then the words of the Royal Psalmist break in upon us with the angelic acclamations, the music of heaven's trumpets, and the gorgeous pageant of countless multitudes whom the Conqueror leads up to heaven. The gospel follows with its brief allusion to the Ascension, and the Paschal candle is quenched and it seems that the light in the darkness of our pilgrimage has departed. But the Credo is recited and again we catch up the glad thought of the triumph of Christ and the joy in heaven, "God is ascended with Jubilee, and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet." And in secret we pray that His triumph may be a pledge of our triumph over present danger and of our acceptance into everlasting life. The moment of sacrifice approaches and a joyous preface reminds us that He ascended to make us partakers of His divine nature, and therefore we join the heavenly choirs in singing to His glory. The divine Action over, we again "sing to the Lord," and once more beseech "that we may obtain the invisible effects of the visible mysteries we have received."

The feast of the Ascension is among the most ancient in the liturgy of the Church. As soon as persecution ceased, the feast made its way naturally in all parts of the Church, for it was impossible that the concluding act of our Saviour's life should remain unnoticed among the festivals and in the liturgy. And its

introduction was rendered all the easier since Scripture distinctly specifies the day on which the event took place. It is not so with Corpus Christi. The introduction of this feast dates from a comparatively late time. Holy Thursday was and still is the festival of the Blessed Sacrament, it is celebrated with the pomp and ceremony of a great festival, but the Church is in grief and mourning, the shadow of the Cross throws its pall over the splendors of the day, the consecration of the holy oils, and other ceremonies overshadow the commemoration of the important event which took place on that day—the institution of the holy Eucharist. It was this fact which suggested the introduction of a festival, especially intended to commemorate that event, as is expressly stated in the papal bull issued by Pope Urban IV in 1264. As the feast commemorates the most precious gift left us by our Jesus when He ascended on high, so the office of the day is one of the most beautiful in the liturgy. It is prayerful rather than majestic; it breathes deep love rather than enthusiastic praise. The work of St. Thomas Aquinas, it displays poetic gifts little inferior to those displayed by this Doctor in his great works on the mysteries of religion and the dogmas of the Church.

The Ascension speaks to us of the departing Christ, Corpus Christi, of the Christ abiding with us; the Ascension, with all its triumphant joy, leaves us with a sense of loneliness; Corpus Christi, with all its warmth of devotion, with all its humility, brings a sense of communion with our Eucharist God that wraps heart and soul close within the embrace of pitying love. After the procession that accompanied Jesus to Mt. Olivet, the Apostles returned to men of like passions with themselves where heretofore they had returned with "joy" to the Lord. After the procession of Corpus Christi we return with joy to the Lord, who is to abide with us forever.

What could be richer, what more joyful than the sublime words of the Eightieth Psalm that forms the Introit of the Mass! What assuring comfort is discovered in the Collect, recalling the "perpetual memorial of the Passion that may bring the fruits of the Redemption into our soul." The Beloved Disciple, in the gospel, tells us of the promise made by Jesus on the banks of Lake Tiberias a year before the Last Supper, while the Apostle of the Gentiles, in the Epistle, vividly depicts the institution of the holy Eucharist and solemnly warns us against the sacrilegious daring of receiving the Body and Blood of the Lord unworthily.

How beautifully are the two testaments paralleled in the Gradual, which extols the divine bounty, and the verse following, in which that bounty finds its fullest expression in the offering of Jesus Himself as our truest nourishment. Does the Epistle warn us to prove ourselves that we are worthy to receive this nourishment, then does the Offertory tell us to be holy to our God and not defile His Name. The flour from which that bread is made came from grains of wheat taken from different stalks from different fields, watered by different clouds, reaped by different hands, but now all one. The grapes from which that wine was pressed grew on different vines, hung from different clusters—now they are mingled in one vine. So in the Secret, the priest prays that in the Church there may be unity and peace. The Preface reminds us of Christ's visible coming in the Incarnation. He has now, however, ascended to the Father and so the prayer goes on "that we may be carried by Him to the love of things invisible." The invisible mysteries are over, and again in the Communion the words of warning are taken up from the Epistle that we should tremble at the very thought of an unworthy Communion. The final prayer of the Post Communion again makes us feel the loneliness of Christ's bodily departure, makes us feel that the Eucharist is the means of bringing us to Him, makes our hearts go out in longing for "the everlasting possession of Thyself, as a pledge of which we have received Thy Body and Blood."

We might go back a moment to the Sequence which follows the Epistle. This, one of the three or four Sequences used in the Liturgy, is a magnificent choral burst of triumph in which the Church, the true Sion, is called upon to express her enthusiasm and love for the living and life-giving Bread. "Praise thy Saviour, O, Sion, praise thy guide and shepherd in hymns and canticles." Then the Mystery is developed with marvelous precision and solemnity, and the Sequence pauses, as it were, with fear, "Lo! the Bread of angels is made the food of pilgrims." It is as though the poet would retrace his steps, but with sudden confidence he falls at the feet of Jesus, "O, Good Shepherd, true Bread: Jesus have mercy upon us, feed us, defend us, make us to be Thy companions in the banquet above and Thy joint heirs and fellow citizens with Thy saints." It is to the gentle, pitying Jesus, the prisoner of love, waiting in our tabernacles to comfort the wayworn and weary to whom we appeal, the thorn-crowned Man of Sorrows with pierced

hands, and feet, on whose breast it is so sweet to lay the tired head.

The most splendid part of the office of Corpus Christi, that which most distinguishes it from other festivals, is the solemn procession. Unlike the procession for the Forty Hours, it has no penitential element; unlike that of Holy Thursday, it has no shadow of the Cross. To-day the Church gives full freedom to the transports of love which fill her heart for her divine Spouse, who resides with her in the Sacrament of love. Enthroned in the glittering Ostensorium, borne in the veiled hands of His servant beneath the silken canopy, accompanied by lighted tapers, hymned with canticles of joy and exaltation, adored and worshiped by the faithful, Jesus is borne along triumphantly with all the pomp and magnificence possible, borne among His loved ones to bless them and to receive the homage of their hearts. Does not His presence speak to the heart and ask its gratitude? Do not the flowers scattered along the way tell us of the beauty and brightness and abundance of His gifts and prompt us to a spirit of sacrifice? Do not the clouds of incense rising to the sky invite us to a return of love? Do not the holy hymns that resound through the church tell us of the great mystery we celebrate, of the stupendous gift we have received, of the stupendous truth, that God is with us? And shall our heart be cold, our lips dumb, our soul unmoved? Is it not in our hearts that He would be borne in triumph? Is it not our virtues that He would see carpeting His way? Is it not our prayers that He would have ascending like clouds of incense and myrrh and filling the heavens? He is not replaced in the tabernacle after the procession, but high and exalted upon His throne, that for eight days the faithful may keep devout and adoring watch.

"O, saving host, that openest heaven's gate, we are pressed by wars and foes; O, give us strength and aid; may everlasting glory be to Thee, O God! and may He give to us life without end in our country above!" Yes, "in our country above," where Jesus is, where Jesus went on the day of His Ascension, and where we long to join Him. And thus we come again to the union of these feasts. Our prayer on Corpus Christi and throughout its octave is that we may have "life without end in our country above."

Christ will not be born again as in Bethlehem, He will not die again as on Calvary, neither will He rise again, but He will ascend again: "This Jesus, who hath been taken up from you into heaven,

shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven." He will come again as the Lord of hosts, and as the Lord of hosts He will ascend again to His Father. He will again pass through the everlasting doors with a greater company than before, for He will lead along with Him all those who shall have been raised from their graves and been found worthy, all the souls and bodies of the just changed and made glorious, like unto His glorious Body, all the angelic hosts, and all the saints. Shall we be among that blessed throng that shall accompany the King of glory? Shall we cry out with them: "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates; and the King of glory shall enter in?"

Each of us at our baptism was made a member of Christ and an inheritor of the Kingdom of heaven. This sanctifying grace of Jesus Christ is as the seal of the Great King, entitling him who bears it to have admittance on that day with the royal train in at the gates of the eternal city. Have we been, are we strong enough, to preserve that grace, to guard that passport?

Turn we then to Jesus in the holy Eucharist, He will fill us with strength, fire us with love, give us power to go upon the lion and the adder; He will be the cause, and source, and spring of glorious virtues, of noble efforts in God's service. He will do these things *in* us, but not *for* us. That dear Lord will have us ourselves labor and fight, for He said by His Apostle: "He also that striveth for the mastery is not crowned, except He strive lawfully." Our striving will be the golden key that will open the way for the true ark of the Lord to be brought into our camp and to keep it there unto our victory. Our holy Communion, our hours before the blessed Sacrament, will tell upon us more and more, will make us more and more what we ought to be, will make us so full of love, so self-denying, so pure, so holy, that, when "the silver cords have been loosed, and when the golden bowl has been broken at the fountain and the wheel broken at the cistern," we will have our pledge of admittance within the gates of heaven. Strengthened and sustained by the Body and Blood of Jesus here, we shall be found worthy to be in His train on that day when the gates shall be lifted up and we will enter in with Him into the heavenly city.

XXVI. PENTECOST

BY DOM BERNARD HAYES, O.S.B.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Prologue.—The Pentecost feast; its solemnity and some noteworthy rites.

II. Its origin and significance. (1) Shown from its Jewish type. (a) The Jewish festival; (b) Its fulfilment in the Christian feast; (c) A contrast. (2) Shown from the Christian liturgy: (a) From the Gospel of the Feast; the "manifestation" of Christ; (b) from the Introit and Prayer; the extension of Christ's influence.

III. What the feast means for us in its annual recurrence. (a) It is not merely to recall an interesting historical event, but to praise and thank the Holy Spirit for His continuous influence; (b) to beg that we may be sanctified by His gifts, as the Sacred Humanity was sanctified.

IV. What are these gifts? (1) In general; (2) in particular, a and b? (a) Gifts to the Will: (1) Fear of God; (2) Piety; (3) Fortitude. (b) Gifts to the Intellect: (1) Knowledge; (2) Counsel; (3) Understanding; (4) Wisdom.

V. Conclusion.

I. The feast of Pentecost, my dear brethren, which we are now celebrating, is one of the greatest festivals of the Christian year, ranking in dignity with that of Easter in the liturgy of the Church. Both feasts enjoy privileged octaves, for during these octaves no feast, however great, may be celebrated. In former days the eves of these feasts were chosen for the solemn administration of baptism, and from this also we may estimate their dignity. On Holy Saturday the font was solemnly blessed, prophecies were read for the instruction of those to be baptized, and the neophytes after their baptism put on white garments. These they wore till the following Sunday, when the octave ended, and, hence, the first Sunday after Easter was called *Dominica in albis*—the "Sunday of the White Robes," a name which it still retains.

On Pentecost eve these holy rites and significant ceremonies were repeated. The font was again blessed, the prophecies read, and the newly baptized put on the garments of innocence.

Though the custom of solemn baptism no longer exists, yet the solemn blessing of the font and the reading of the prophecies remain to remind us of the ancient rite.

II. 1. But you will ask me, my dear brethren, what was the *origin* and *significance* of this feast of Pentecost? To answer this we

must go back far beyond the time of Christ, and find out the origin and significance of the Jewish festival, for this was a type of the great Christian feast.

(*a*) The feast of Pentecost was one of the three great annual festivals of the Jews, on which they were commanded to go up to the holy city of Jerusalem, in accordance with that law which ordained that "three times in the year all males shall appear in the sight of the almighty Lord the God of Israel" (Exodus xxxiv, 23).

There was a long tradition amongst the Jews that the festival commemorated the giving of the law on Mount Sinai upon tables of stone, and it was sometimes called the "feast of the law." Now, since this event was supposed to have taken place fifty days after the celebration of the first paschal solemnity in Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea, the feast was also called "Pentecost," a Greek word meaning "fiftieth." And because it was celebrated seven weeks after the Pasch yet another name was given to it, that of the "Feast of Weeks." But not only was it a commemoration of the giving of the law, it was an annual festival of thanksgiving for the harvest, wherein to praise God for His gifts and to acknowledge Him as the supreme Lord of all, as was commanded in the Book of Exodus: "Thou shalt keep the feast of weeks with the first fruits of the corn of the wheat-harvest" (Exodus xxxiv, 22). And of its solemnity we may judge from the words of God himself: "And you shall call this day most solemn and most holy. You shall do no servile work therein. It shall be an everlasting ordinance in all your dwellings and generations" (Lev. xxiii, 21).

(*b*) If, my dear brethren, I have dwelt upon the Jewish feast at some length, it is that I may show you how it was a true type of the Christian festival. For, consider what happened on the great day of the first Christian Pentecost.

When our Lord, ten days after His ascension, sent down the Holy Ghost on His disciples in Jerusalem, it was to promulgate a new law and to reap a new harvest. The new law was written, not upon tablets of stone, amidst the thunders of Sinai and the terror of the people, but upon the "tablets of men's hearts" by the "Paraclete," the "Comforter"—the holy spirit of Love, of Consolation, and of Strength. On this day, the fiftieth from the day of the slaying of the true Paschal Lamb, the first fruits of the harvest sown in Christ"s Blood were gathered; the apostles were enlightened and strengthened; men of all nations were converted

to become in their turn apostles of Jesus Christ in their own countries; and the great Church of God, the storehouse of God's mercies, was established.

(*c*) What a contrast there was, my dear brethren, between the first Pentecost of the Jews and that of the Christians! To celebrate the former a mighty nation, freed from the slavery of Egyptian tyranny, is gathered together to find its God in the desert. They are God's people, a people apart from the pagan nations of the world; and amongst them is to live the tradition of the Messias who is to come. But they are a proud and strong-willed race, and God rules them with the rod of fear. They had forgotten their God amidst the flesh-pots of Egypt; therefore are they led forth into the wilderness, and there miracles are multiplied. On the fiftieth day the law is given to them, and the thunders roll over the desert waters and the lightnings flash, and the people are stricken to the earth with fear of the mighty God who rules over them. In the fulness of time the Son of the living God becomes Man. Once again has a Leader been sent by God to His people. Once again is the Paschal lamb slain, but this time it is the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. Once again are the chosen people led apart, but now it is but a mere handful in an upper room of the great city of Jerusalem. Once again there is a "rushing wind," and the lightnings flash and the house rocks, and all men wonder and fear. For who can know except those few chosen ones that this is the promulgation of the new law by the coming of the Holy Spirit of God? The tornado rushes into the land of beauty, and all fair things are heaped in ruin at its passage; but the mighty wind of Pentecost was the spirit of life. It found a land of ruin and death and left it a paradise of Christian virtues. The lightning flashes; but now it is not a sword in the hands of death, but rests as tongues of fire on the heads of each one of the disciples in the upper room. The fire of ardent charity and of fortitude, the light of understanding and of wisdom, and other gifts of the Holy Spirit are poured into the souls of the apostles. They catch the spirit of Jesus, see His aims and share His courage; they understand the victory of His seeming failure, and are ready in their turn to live amidst failures and sufferings and to die on the cross for the cause of Christ. How could these gifts fail to make these men, frail though they were, like to Him who was their Master?

(*d*) Considering then, my dear brethren, that the Jewish festival

was kept on the fiftieth day after the Pasch, the very day of the coming of the Holy Ghost, and that in its significance it expressed so accurately the marvelous working of the Holy Spirit, is it surprising that the apostles and their successors retained the Pentecost feast of the Jews, giving it a new and truer meaning, and celebrated it with a devotion and reverence second only to that shown for the great feast of Easter? Thus was Pentecost the fulfilment and perfect realization of the Jewish type.

2. Now let us turn to our own liturgy and learn more of its deep significance. (*a*) In the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, from which the gospel of to-day is taken, we read that Jesus told His followers that it was expedient for them that He should leave them; that He would not leave them orphans, but would ask the Father to send them another Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world could not receive . . . who should be with them and in them; that He would manifest Himself to those who loved Him, and that the Holy Spirit would *teach them* all things, and bring all things to their minds whatsoever He had said to them.

From these words of our divine Saviour we may understand the work of the Holy Ghost. It was nothing less than the "*Manifestation*" of Jesus Christ. It is quite evident from the Gospel narrative that even His most intimate followers misunderstood His life and teaching. They had also forgotten many of the things He had said to them. Moreover, in accordance with His own Divine Will, Jesus was restricted by human limitations; His words and influence did not extend beyond His own country and time. But He belonged to the whole world and to all time. Therefore, He sent His Spirit to do for every individual and for all time what He himself had done for those who gathered around Him in Galilee and Judea.

(*b*) "The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world," the Introit says, not only spreading the true faith to its furthest limits and guiding the universal Church in her teaching, but also bringing to those who will receive Him light to the understanding and fire to the heart, making them understand the life and teaching of Christ, and giving them consolation amidst their efforts to reproduce His image in their souls. This thought is beautifully expressed in the Prayer of the Feast, which is so familiar to us all: "O God, who, by the light of the Holy Ghost, didst this day instruct the hearts of the faithful: grant that, by the same spirit, we may relish what is right and ever rejoice in His consolation." The mission of the

Holy Ghost, therefore, is to continue the work of Jesus, to explain His life and teaching to all men, and to influence them by His grace to carry out this teaching in practice.

How marvelous is this, the continuation and application of the life of Christ!

III. When the Church then, as each year revolves, unites all her children in the celebration of the feast of the Holy Ghost this is its meaning for each one of them.

(*a*) It is not merely to commemorate some benign influence which was at work in the world, nor to recall some event of mere historical interest, but to praise and thank the Holy Spirit for His continuous and never-relaxing influence upon the hearts of men, and (*b*) to beg for an ever-increasing share of those precious gifts which come from Him. For when He comes to a human soul He brings with Him seven gifts, which have power to "manifest" Christ, making His teaching clear to the understanding and winning obedience from the will. By these gifts He sanctified the Sacred Humanity of Christ, as the prophet Isaias foretold: "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him; the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness, and He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Is. xi, 23). By these same gifts He will sanctify *us* as He sanctified the Sacred Humanity, making us ever more conformable to the likeness of Christ.

Oh! precious gifts of the spirit of God! Mighty energies for man's regeneration! What wonderful results follow when their latent powers are called into action by generous cooperation! Look at the souls of the saints, sanctified by these divine gifts; how truly they reflect in their degree the perfection of the Sacred Humanity! Have not these gifts made frail human creatures Christlike in their holiness?

IV. Let us then, my dear brethren, think upon these gifts of the Holy Spirit: (1) that we may learn to love them and be encouraged to stir up the grace of God that is within us. For these gifts *are* within us, infused into our souls by Baptism, and restored to us by Penance if by mortal sin we have rejected them. But of themselves they are latent powers; they have to be called into activity by actual grace, and the extent of their activity depends upon our cooperation with grace.

(2) Let us consider each of them for a moment. They fall natur-

ally into two groups: three perfect our will, the remaining four perfect our understanding. The Fear of God, Godliness or Piety, and Fortitude are the graces of the will, and these we shall consider first.

(*a*) *Gifts to the Will.*—(1) The Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. It is the opponent of Pride. Pride exalts self as the end of all endeavor, and makes a man resist the dominion of God in great things and in small. It has for its motto the war-cry of the rebel angels, "I will not serve."

Look around you, my dear brethren, upon the society of to-day, and see how the rights of God are rejected. Self-interest and self-indulgence are the gods of this people. In their service they toil; in obedience to their dictates they throw aside allegiance to the God who made them and who holds them in the hollow of His hand. Where will they find a remedy for this except in the salutary fear of Him who is to judge the world. Where will they learn their nothingness except in the presence of the Supreme Majesty? How will they be filled with a conviction of their sinfulness and unworthiness but by contrasting themselves with the infinite sanctity of God?

Let the people remember God and tremble before Him as the powers of heaven tremble, and then they will learn that obedience to God which is the foundation of a Christian life.

Even those faithful souls who look upon God as their Father must work out their salvation "in fear and trembling" (II. Philipp. ii, 12). This fear is reverential rather than servile. It springs from a sense of God's majesty and not merely from the fear of future punishment. It must blend with their love of God; they must, as the Psalmist bids, "Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice unto Him with trembling" (Ps. ii, 11). This gift of the Holy Spirit will give to the service of God that spirit of humble compunction which makes the faithful soul sensible of its own weakness and ever mindful of the majesty of God. It is the spirit of the saints.

(2) *The Gift of Godliness or Piety.*—But God is not only all holy, He is also all loving. He is a kind Father, and this second gift of the Holy Spirit introduces into the relations of man with his God the warmth of filial affection. The Latin word "Pietas" means the loving relation between a father and his son. The Holy Spirit makes us feel that we have received the spirit of adoption of sons by which we cry "Abba! Father!" (Rom. viii, 15). No longer, my brethren, is our religious life one of essentials merely, which we

would neglect if we dared. We are beginning to think more of God and less of self. Sin now strikes us in a new light, as an offense against God, as a wasting of the Precious Blood of Jesus, and not merely as meriting dire punishment. Then, perhaps, there grows up a desire to cooperate with the work of Jesus in the world, to help in the saving of sinners, to do some work, however small, for the glory of God and the good of our fellowmen. The practices of our holy religion become delightful to us, and we love to receive Jesus in holy Communion very often; we turn instinctively to Mary and the saints for help, and the "Communion of Saints" is no longer a mere article of faith which we confess with our lips, but a brotherhood which is to help us on earth and to welcome us in heaven.

Whence this change which has come over the soul, making religion a living force in its life and a source of consolation before undreamt of? Whence, but from the gift of piety which the Holy Spirit has given? Is there any gift, my brethren, more needed by this present-day world than this gift of enthusiasm for religion, springing from a filial love of our kind Father who is in heaven? The hearts of men love this world, their hands grasp at the shadows which are considered the prizes of life, their feet wander in paths which lead only to the abodes of misery. These men have no love for God, no time for work for Him, no desire to seek Him. Most Holy Spirit, send Thy gift of piety upon these people! Draw them to Thee by the bands of filial love!

(3) *The Gift of Fortitude.*—When we enter upon the service of God we must prepare our souls for temptation. God proves every man whom He receives. The love of God is not another form of self-love, but it implies the gradual extinction of self-seeking in its many forms. It will be difficult to resist the spirit of the world; it will be more difficult to be firm in the reformation of our natures. Vices will have to be uprooted and virtues planted and carefully nurtured, as delicate plants are cared for. We shall have to persevere in our efforts if we wish to receive the crown of life. When we remember the strength of passion, the difficulty of virtue, the unsteadiness of the human will—like to the restless ocean in its risings and fallings, in its storms and calms—we cry, "Will anyone ever reach the port for which he is sailing? Can any vessel live in such a sea and amidst such tempests?"

My brethren, the difficulties are too much for the strength of

human nature alone and unaided. Therefore, the spirit of God gives to men of good will His gift of Fortitude, by means of which they can most surely reach the haven of eternal rest. Thus is the will of man helped by the Holy Spirit. The gift of Fear makes him obey God who is so mighty, and who is to judge all men and to cast the unworthy into hell; the gift of Piety makes him obey God as His father and love to live in His house all his days; and the gift of Fortitude gives the necessary help to his weakness.

(*b*) *Gifts to the Intellect.*—The other great power of the soul is the understanding and this is perfected by the remaining four gifts:

(1) By the gift of Knowledge the Holy Spirit instructs our ignorance, showing us what is true and what is false, what is good and what is evil. Do not they love and seek for what they should hate, and hate what they should most esteem? For what do men love and seek but pleasure and self-indulgence and the wealth which will supply these? On the other hand, how few are the lovers of the Cross of Christ, of purity, of humility, of sincere charity, of real and regular prayer!

The gift of Knowledge will save us from being influenced by the prevailing corruption, and will make us love and seek whatsoever things are good, pure and beneficial to our higher nature.

(2) But the Holy Spirit wishes to guide not only our general attitude of mind and feeling, but also each action of our daily lives. He wishes to be an intimate friend, one who "comes in and goes out" with us all the days of our lives. Our souls He looks upon as His dwelling-place, for He would stay with us to help us in each duty of our state of life. The routine duties of our daily lives He saves from unfruitfulness by suggesting a right intention to us in their performance, or by correcting and reproaching us for any unworthy motive. Why, then, my brethren, do we not turn more frequently to this our Friend? When we have some important work to perform or serious decision to make, why do we not turn for counsel to the Holy Spirit of God who dwells within our souls in order to guide us?

(3) But, my brethren, let us consider another deficiency in ourselves and another remedy of the Holy Spirit. The great spiritual truths proposed to us by our faith are obscure, and at first seem unable to rouse our interest. There is in us, my brethren, a natural *dulness* in respect to spiritual things, and this dulness is

increased by sin and by irregular affections. The grace of the Holy Spirit shines like a sun through the mists of earth which envelop us, and the tree of faith wakes to life and puts forth its blossoms and its fruit. When the gift of Understanding shines upon a human soul the faith that is implanted no longer remains unfruitful. There comes to that soul an appreciation of its faith and an insight into its meaning. It is enlightened about God and Jesus Christ and it learns to value ever more highly the Sacraments, which are the living fountains of the Saviour, prayer and the other gifts of the good God. The most unlearned in worldly wisdom have, by this gift, passed almost beyond faith and have attained to a marvelous insight into God.

(4) And, lastly, my brethren, we must remember that though the ways of God are at first steep and difficult, yet as we advance we shall gain strength till we run the ways of God's commandments with unspeakable sweetness and consolation. This, too, is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. This gift of Wisdom endows the soul with sweetness, consolation and sensible graces. When one is sick the taste is vitiated and feels disgust for what in health gave pleasure. The majority of men are sick in soul and they find no pleasure in the things of God. They care only for what is of the earth and pleasing to the senses. This depraved taste will not be rectified till by mortification the soul is cured of its passions and is restored to perfect health. The gift of Wisdom is the gift of health, and it fills the soul with such a love of goodness and virtue that it feels nothing but disgust for other objects. The vice opposed to it is *folly*. This possesses the one who despises the true end of his existence and puts up in its place some idol which he worships—pleasure, avarice or ambition. Folly makes such things as these the idols of its worship. Is not King Folly, my brethren, enthroned as king of this world?

Is not that saying of the Sacred Text true, that the number of fools is infinite? Such people think that they alone are wise and esteem the lives of good men as madness. They, forsooth, are wise because they grasp the fruits of this life and try to find in them happiness for their immortal souls! Fools! their fruits will turn to dust in their mouths whilst the folly, as they deem it, of a good life, *i. e.*, of self-restraint, of humility, of charity, of prayer, will, in God's own time, prove to be the very wisdom of God. Happy souls whom God rewards with His gift of wisdom! The crown of life

is upon their brows; They "taste and see that the Lord is sweet." They have learned that the Cross, from which at first they shrank, is a crown, and humility the bright garment of the King's daughter.

V. These are a few of the results of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the soul; and on this great feast you would do well, my dear brethren, to think of them and to stir up the grace of God that is within you.

Let us thank Jesus for sending the Holy Spirit; give grateful praise to the Holy Spirit of God, and beg most earnestly that He would change your hearts as He changed the hearts of the apostles, and that He would mould your souls to the likeness of your Divine Model, Jesus Christ, to whom be honor and glory forever. Amen.

XXVII. TRINITY SUNDAY

BY THE REV. FERREOL GIRARDEY, C.SS.R.

"Who inhabiteth light inaccessible."—I. Tim, vi, 16.
"Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts; all the earth is full of Thy glory."—Is. vi, 3.

SYNOPSIS.—I. The mystery of the Blessed Trinity, the greatest of mysteries.
II. Why the feast of the Blessed Trinity was not celebrated in the early Church.
III. Origin of this feast.
IV. Why it is celebrated on the first Sunday after Pentecost.
V. The office of the feast of the Blessed Trinity.
VI. The Mass of Trinity Sunday: (1) the Introit, Collect and Epistle; (2) the Gospel; (3) the Offertory, Preface, Communion and Post-communion.
VII. How we may honor the Blessed Trinity.
VIII. The benefits we owe to the Blessed Trinity.
IX. What fruits our practical faith in this mystery can obtain for us at the hour of death.
X. Brief exhortation.

I. The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is the deepest, the most impenetrable of mysteries. It cannot be otherwise, for if in our investigations of the material world of living creatures, of our own human nature, we meet at almost every step with incomprehensible mysteries, how can we ever expect to comprehend the very nature of God, the manner of being, the internal divine life and activity of the infinitely perfect Being, who, by a single act of His omnipotent will, has called into existence and endowed with most varied qualities and perfection numberless creatures! The very thought of His Being and of His infinite perfections necessarily fills us with profound awe, and the more we endeavor to reason about Him and to understand Him, the more we feel convinced of our utter powerlessness to form an adequate conception of His Being, of His interior life and activity.

II. The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, of one God in three divine Persons perfectly equal to, and yet perfectly distinct from each other, is the foundation of the Christian religion. This mystery is, in fact, the center from which all religion radiates and to which all religion converges; it is the ultimate object of all our worship

on earth, the ultimate object of our adoration and happiness in eternity. This doctrine is most clearly expressed and frequently mentioned in the most ancient symbols of faith and in every part of the Liturgy of the Church. And yet, strange to say, a good many centuries passed before any one in the Church undertook to institute a feast in honor of this grandest of mysteries, the mystery which was ever so constantly recalled and honored in all Church functions and in the very daily life of her members. But we need not be astonished at this, for, in the first place, the feasts of the Church are intended to commemorate some mystery of our redemption, or some fact connected therewith which has taken place in time. As a rule, the Church does not celebrate abstract mysteries, that is, mysteries which are not susceptible of some sensible representation. The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is not a mystery or fact that has taken place in time, for God is eternal. It is, moreover, above all visible representation, and is too stupendous to be worthily celebrated. Secondly, from the very origin of the Church and of her Liturgy, almost countless ways and means were used to express the belief in this mystery and pay homage to it; for all liturgical prayers, however ancient, end with the invocation of the Blessed Trinity. All the Sacraments have ever been administered, and all blessings have ever been conferred, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Furthermore, all the psalms in the divine office, which is the official prayer of the Church and of her clergy, have always been concluded with the doxology, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," etc. In fine, from the earliest times, every Sunday had already been a miniature feast of the most Holy Trinity, for the symbol of St. Athanasius, which is so clear an explanation of all that faith teaches concerning this adorable mystery, was then recited at the Prime of the divine office of the Sunday, and the Preface of the Blessed Trinity was sung in the Sunday Mass. Hence, we need not wonder that for a long period no need was felt for a special feast to honor this grandest of mysteries, since special honor and worship were offered almost continually by the Church in her Liturgy and by the faithful in their lives and devotions.

III. The origin of the feast of the Blessed Trinity dates from the latter half of the eighth century. Its celebration spread gradually in Germany and especially in France. The Popes, however, being no friends of novelties, never accepted new feasts and new

devotions without previous long, patient and thorough investigation. Hence, when the subject of a feast of the Blessed Trinity was first broached to Pope Alexander II. in the second half of the eleventh century, he replied that there was no more need of celebrating in the Church a feast in honor of the most Holy Trinity, than to celebrate one in honor of the unity of God, especially since the Church daily paid special homage to the Blessed Trinity in the divine office, during holy Mass, and in all the functions of her Liturgy, and the faithful constantly honored and invoked the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost in all their prayers. Later on, after the celebration of the feast had spread over the greater portion of the Church, the holy and learned Pope John XXII. (1316-1334) canonically instituted and prescribed it for the whole Church.

IV. At first the feast of the Blessed Trinity was celebrated in some places on the first Sunday after Pentecost, and in others on the last. In the course of time the celebration of this feast was assigned definitely to the first Sunday after Pentecost. This choice of the Sunday following Whitsunday is most appropriate, for, in the first place, the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, although obscurely revealed in the Old Testament, was not clearly and publicly taught and proclaimed until after the Holy Ghost had descended upon the apostles on Pentecost Sunday, the day of the foundation of the Church; hence it was quite natural to assign the celebration of the feast to the Sunday immediately following. Moreover, Pentecost, like the great feasts of Christmas and Easter, had no full octave like all the other feasts, but was commemorated only for seven instead of eight days. Hence, to fill up the gap and complete the eight days with an appropriate celebration, the feast of the Blessed Trinity has been assigned to the first Sunday after Pentecost, that is, to the day which completes its octave. But in what class of feasts has it been placed? Perhaps in the very highest class, like Christmas, Epiphany, Easter and Pentecost? Or, has it not even been set apart in a class by itself, higher than any other feast, since the mystery it commemorates is the greatest of all mysteries? The Church, convinced of her utter inability to celebrate in a worthy manner so sublime a mystery, acknowledges it by placing the feast of the Blessed Trinity among feasts of the second class.

V. The Office of the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity.—In the divine office, which, as we have remarked before, is the official prayer of the Church, recited in her name by her clergy and religious

orders, the feast of the Blessed Trinity has a peculiar and appropriate set of psalms, hymns, antiphons and lessons, all of which remind us of what faith teaches concerning this mystery and of our obligations towards our triune God. The Church therein calls upon us to "adore the one true God in three Persons, and the three Persons in one God; to profess our belief that God is one in substance and three in Persons; forever to bless, praise and exalt above all the Father and the Son together with the Holy Ghost; to invoke and adore the Blessed Trinity, our hope, our salvation, our honor; to beseech it to free, save and vivify us; to offer the homage of praise, glory and thanksgiving to the Blessed Trinity, from whom, through whom, and in whom all things are"; and, moreover, "eternally to confess, praise, bless and glorify the unbegotten Father, the only-begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, the holy and undivided Trinity." The Church also teaches, with St. John, that there are "three who give testimony in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one" (John i, 5, 7). Finally, the Church prays with St. Paul that "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the charity of God and the communication of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen" (II. Cor. xiii, 13). She prescribes the recitation, at the hour of Prime, of the Athanasian Creed, which, as I have already remarked, so fully and clearly sets forth what faith teaches concerning the Blessed Trinity and each of the three divine Persons.

VI. The Mass of Trinity Sunday.—(1) The Liturgy of the Mass of Trinity Sunday aims at expressly honoring this great mystery, which is the foundation of our faith. The white color of the vestments, being a sign of joy, symbolizes the infinite simplicity and purity of the divine essence. The Mass opens with an appropriate praise and glorification of the one, holy and undivided Trinity as the divine source of the mercies bestowed on mankind. In the prayer proper to the feast the Church prays that our faith may be firm in confessing the Unity and Trinity of God, so that we may thereby be protected against adversity. The epistle is taken from St. Paul's epistle to the Romans (ii, 33-36). In it we read these remarkable words, so befitting the feast: "O, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and unsearchable His ways! . . . Of Him, by Him, and in Him are all things; to Him be glory forever." Everything in God, everything that God does

exteriorly, is full of mystery so deep as to be unfathomable by the mind of any creature, however exalted. Hence, when considering God and His works, we should experience a feeling of profound reverence and awe, and an intense desire to give glory to Him all the days of our life.

(2) The Gospel of Trinity Sunday is as follows: "At that time Jesus said to His disciples: "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth. Going, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii, 18-20). This gospel is most appropriate to the feast of the Blessed Trinity, on account of its contents. Our divine Saviour, being about to leave this world and return to His heavenly Father, from whom He had come, and to send the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, to enlighten and sanctify His apostles, and to enable them to preach the gospel and found His Church, reminded them that, because He possessed all power in heaven and on earth, He now commissioned them to go forth and preach the gospel to all nations and make them members of His Church by conferring baptism on them. He even directs them how to baptize, bidding them to do so in the name of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. From that time it should not be sufficient to believe merely in one true God; but men, to be saved, should expressly profess their faith in one God in three divine Persons, and all the Sacraments should be administered in their name, all prayers and petitions should be ultimately addressed to them. Moreover, the apostles sent directly by Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, were ordered to teach to all men, not what they pleased, but only what He Himself had commanded and taught them. The apostles, thus commissioned by Jesus Christ Himself, preached these truths all over the world against Judaism and the polytheism of paganism; confirmed them by numberless miracles and with their own blood and their very life; and millions of martyrs suffered excruciating torments and died in their defense; the brightest minds, and the noblest hearts, and the most virtuous souls the world has ever seen have firmly believed and faithfully practised what the apostles preached, thereby glorifying one God in three divine Persons. This faith has renewed the face of the

earth and transformed the grossly immoral pagan world into the Christian world, which has produced and still produces numberless holy and heroic souls and the most excellent and admirable institutions of Christian charity. Moreover, we should learn from the Gospel of this feast not only to believe and practise the teachings of the apostles as something divine, but also to show zeal for the salvation of our fellow-men. All men are called to the true faith, for, says St. Paul: "God wills all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth" (Tim. i, 2-4). He does not will that any one should be lost. He has placed it in our power to sanctify and save ourselves through the numerous means at our disposal, and, although we may not be directly commissioned or able to save others, nevertheless we are bound by the law of Christian charity to contribute to their salvation, first, by giving them the benefit of our good example in our holy life, which will serve them as a constant and persuasive sermon, and also by contributing according to our means to the propagation of the faith, to the education of aspirants to the priesthood, and to the support of missions and missionaries both in our country and in foreign lands. Let us not fail in this great duty; its fulfilment will conduce powerfully to our own salvation.

(3) The Offertory prayer of the Mass consists of these words of St. Paul: "Blessed be God the Father, and the only-begotten Son of God, and likewise the Holy Ghost, for He hath shown us His mercy" (II. Cor. i, 3). This prayer clearly expresses the dogma of one God in three divine Persons, together with God's ineffable mercy in our behalf. In the Preface assigned to this feast and to all the Sundays of the year, the Church professes her belief in the Unity of the divine essence and in the Trinity of Persons, who are perfectly equal to each other, and yet are distinct in their personality. In the Communion anthem the Church again praises God for His great mercy towards us. In the last prayer she requests that the reception of the blessed Eucharist, together with the profession of faith in one God in three Persons, may avail us for the welfare of both body and soul. The Church has also a votive Mass in honor of the Blessed Trinity, which is intended for occasions of thanksgiving for favors received. When, on solemn occasions of thanksgiving the *Te Deum* is chanted, appropriate prayers are always added in honor of the Blessed Trinity.

VII. Let us daily honor the Blessed Trinity by devoutly making

the sign of the Cross at our rising and our retiring, before and after prayer, and especially in time of temptation, for the sign of the Cross, together with the invocation of the three divine Persons, is a powerful means of driving away the devil tempting us to sin. Let us also often recite the Doxology, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," etc., and this not only in thanksgiving when things go on well with us, but especially when we are beset with sufferings, trials and misfortunes, for we thereby conform ourselves entirely with the holy and adorable will of God, who therein wills our real welfare, and sends us the crosses necessary to secure it. When we assist at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, let us at the *Sanctus* repeat it with the priest in all humility and gratitude, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts; the heavens and the earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest."

VIII. To the Blessed Trinity we owe simple and humble faith, profound adoration, fervent praise, ardent love and heartfelt gratitude. The triune God not only gave us existence, making us to His own image, and loading us with numberless gifts and favors in the natural order, but He has, in the supernatural, exalted us to even incomprehensible greatness. The Father adopted us in His Son, who became man like ourselves; the Son made us His brethren and enlightens us with His revelation; the Holy Ghost has chosen us for His dwelling. Through the Sacrament of Baptism the whole Blessed Trinity has taken possession of us, and we "have become partakers of the divine nature," as the prince of the apostles tells us (II. Pet. i, 4). This most wonderful fact is recalled to us whenever we make the sign of the Cross, pronouncing the names of the three divine Persons. Baptism ushers us into this spiritual and supernatural life "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In their name, also, we receive the other Sacraments and the blessings of God's Church and of her priesthood. To the Blessed Trinity we address our petitions in our needs; and to the Blessed Trinity we offer thanks for favors received.

IX. And if we persevere faithfully in honoring and serving the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we may confidently hope to have the consolation, when our departure from this life is at hand, of being ushered into eternity by God's minister in the words of the Liturgy of the Church: "Depart, O Christian soul, out of this sinful world in the name of God the Father Almighty who created

thee; in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered and died for thee; in the name of the Holy Ghost who sanctified thee. May peace come to thee this day, and may thy abode be in holy Zion." Then the priest, continuing the commendation of our soul, will beseech God to impart joy to it and not be mindful of our sins, saying: "For, although he has sinned, yet he did not deny, but believed in Thee, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost." Thus will the Church, through her priest, pray that our faith in the three divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity may, notwithstanding our shortcomings, be our salvation. Finally, at our funeral the priest will thus implore God's mercy in our favor: "Enter not, O Lord, into judgment with Thy servant, and let not Thy sentence reject him; may he deserve to escape condemnation, who in life was marked with the sign of the Holy Trinity."

X. Since the sign of the Blessed Trinity, indelibly impressed in our souls, is a subject of hope of salvation, let us respect and revere it, and lead a life worthy of it, so that at the end of this short life it may be our firm hope, our dearest title to heavenly glory. Wherefore, after believing in and serving the Blessed Trinity, in time we may in eternity with the angels and saints behold, praise, thank, love and glorify the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

XXVIII. THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

I. The Sacrificial Banquet

"A certain man made a great supper and invited many."—Luke xiv, 16.

SYNOPSIS.—The Eucharist is both Sacrament and Sacrifice. Sacrifice a universal fact in the history of our race. This can only be explained by a Supernatural Revelation. Character of the different sacrifices. The Sacrifice of Calvary a perfect one. It is continued in the Mass. Accidental differences between the two. The Communion an integral part of the Mass. The fourfold purpose of the Mass: (1) adoration, (2) thanksgiving, (3) propitiation, (4) impetration. The liturgy shows vital connection between the Eucharist as a Sacrament and as a Sacrifice.

Owing to Protestant contradictions, it has been needful in the past to emphasize the doctrine that the holy Eucharist is not only a sacrament but also a sacrifice. Now, however, Protestantism is so much on the decline, that we can give equal emphasis to the idea of sacrament and that of sacrifice. The holy Eucharist is a sacrificial banquet in which the heavenly Father sits at meat with His earthly children. It is the means *par excellence* by which union is established between God and man. In so far as the Eucharist is a sacrifice, a Christian people unites itself to its God. In so far as the Eucharist is a sacrament, God unites Himself to a Christian people. The Council of Trent has condemned the doctrine which says that in the Mass there is not offered to God a true and proper sacrifice, or that the phrase "to be offered" merely means that Christ is given to us as a food. But the same Council has also declared that the partaking of the Sacrament is the most effectual way of sharing in the sacrifice. "This holy Synod would desire that in every Mass the faithful who assist thereat should communicate, not only spiritually and in desire, but also by sacramentally partaking, that so they might share more abundantly in the fruits of this most holy sacrifice." Our Holy Father, Pope Pius X. has renewed this teaching in the great eucharistic movement which he has promoted in favor of daily Communion. With the

view, therefore, of helping to realize the Holy Father's desires, I shall, in the following considerations, try to show the vital connection between sacrifice and sacrament.

Throughout the whole history of the human race, in so far as the human race is known, there has existed the practise of man offering presents to the Deity with a view of obtaining some favor in return. Man's concept of the Deity has varied very much; likewise the motives of his service, the kinds of presents which he has offered, and the manner of offering them. But under all the changes there has remained the fundamental idea of giving something to God in acknowledgment of His supremacy and in order to keep in His favor. This phenomenon is so universal that many scholars have deemed it to be a natural instinct. In so far as "natural" means that which man possesses from his birth, that may be true. But in so far as "natural" means that which lacks a supernatural quality or impulse, the opinion can hardly be true. The universality of sacrifice can not be explained on merely natural grounds. And when we bear in mind that many of the pagan sacrifices were offered both to honor the Deity and to propitiate Him, we are impelled to account for the fact by having recourse to a supernatural revelation in the beginning. Certain it is that the sacrifice of some savage nations are marked by deterioration rather than by development, showing that they have fallen away from the primeval revelation. The Fathers of the Church had no doubt but that the Incarnation threw its light backward as well as forward. Nor can we have any doubt but that Jesus Christ is the light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world; whether he be born before the Flood or after it, before the Incarnation or after it; whether born of Jew or Gentile, Christian or Pagan. Every man, in this sense, has a naturally Christian soul. Every man, in this sense, is inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit to worship God, and to express his worship by means of sacrifice.

In the sacrifices of the Old Testament the earlier ones were characterized more as sacrifices of honor and praise. Those under the Levitical law were characterized more as sacrifices of expiation. In the Psalms and Prophets there are passages which show God purifying the materialistic concept of the sacrifice. "Do I eat the flesh of oxen? Do I drink the blood of goats? Offer to the Lord a sacrifice of praise. . . . He honoreth me that offereth a sacrifice of praise."

It is most significant, too, that in all sacrifices there has been included a communion or common meal. This is so striking that some Christian Fathers have believed it to be a trick of the devil, who wished to caricature the Christian Sacraments. Thus, St. Justin Martyr, referring to the mystic feast of bread and wine and water in the religion of Mithra, said that it was the work of bad demons imitating the Eucharist. Nowadays, however, we regard these pagan communions not as caricatures, but as dim shadows, possibly the relics of a primitive revelation, given by God in order to prepare men's minds for the pure communion of His own Body and Blood. The universal verdict, then, of history, is that a sacrifice is the offering of a material thing unto God as an expression of honor and reverence, and as a means of propitiating Him; that such offering must be destroyed, either really or mystically, so that God may receive it; and that men participate in the sacrifice most effectually by partaking of the mystic banquet which completes the sacrifice. The Sacrifice on Calvary was a perfect sacrifice. But there was no communion there, and for this reason we do not believe communion to be the essence of the sacrifice. But, then, the Sacrifice of Calvary is continued in the Mass. Both the offering on Calvary and the offering in the Mass are one and the same sacrifice. And since they are one and the same sacrifice, it is through holy Communion that we unite ourselves most closely with the offering on Calvary. Cornelius à Lapide expresses it most beautifully when he says: "Almighty God, whose delight it is to be with the children of men, in this way wished to demonstrate His condescension towards them, showing Himself so familiar with them as to share their table and meal."

Although the sacrifice of Calvary and that of the Mass are one and the same, yet there are some accidental differences. There is a difference of purpose and a difference in the manner of offering. On Calvary the sacrifice was offered for the redemption of mankind, and, in this respect, was completed once for all. But its efficacy was not there and then applied to every soul that needed it. This was to be the work of time, and the means by which that efficacy was to be wrought were to be the sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacraments. Further, the sacrifice on Calvary was one in which there was real bloodshedding and death. But the sacrifice of the Mass is like that of Melchisedech, a clean sacrifice, without blood and death. The Priest and Victim, however, are the same. In the

Mass the chief Priest is Christ Himself; the human priest, who celebrates, is but His minister. In the Mass the Victim is Christ Himself, really present under the form of bread and wine. Whatever good, therefore, we derive through the Mass has its source and origin in the Sacrifice of Calvary. The Mass, therefore, although it does represent Calvary, is not merely a representation. It is a representation and mystical continuation and repetition of Calvary.

Theologians dispute amongst themselves as to what precisely is the essence of the sacrifice, whether the destruction of the Victim, the offering, or the communion. For the purposes of devotion however, it will be quite sufficient to recognize that these are at least integral parts of the Mass, and that in practice there is never destruction and offering without communion, nor communion without destruction and offering; for even when there is communion outside Mass, the Host then received has its relationship to the Mass in which it was consecrated.

We consider the Mass, then, in its entirety. The Divine Victim is mystically slain, offered and consumed, and thereby the purpose of sacrifice is accomplished. This purpose is fourfold. The first purpose is that of adoration. As in primitive sacrifices homage was paid to the Deity, so also in the Sacrifice of the Mass, but with infinitely greater value; for in this sacrifice the Priest and the Victim are of infinite dignity. The second purpose is that of thanksgiving. Gratitude may be a natural impulse of man. Thanksgiving, by way of sacrifice, may be a supernatural impulse of the Holy Spirit. But the thanksgiving in the Sacrifice of the Mass has been specially revealed to us by Jesus Christ. "And taking bread, He gave thanks, and brake; and gave to them, saying: 'This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of me.'" The third purpose is that of propitiation. The whole aim of the Incarnation was to undo sin. The whole aim of the Passion was to undo sin. The whole aim of the Mass is to undo sin. In our human way of looking at things we conceive God as angry at sin, and we seek to appease Him. What appeases Him most? The sight of blood and suffering? No; but the love of His only begotten Son and the love of His redeemed people which are together set before Him in the Chalice of the Passion. The fourth purpose is that of impetration. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name it shall be given to you." In the sacrifice it is Christ Himself who asks. The priest acts and

speaks in the person of Christ. The whole body of the faithful, together with Christ their head, ask for the things needful for the mystical body. The prayer of petition is never more powerful than when offered through the sacrifice of the Mass.

A most vivid light is thrown on this doctrine by a study of the Liturgy. The Liturgy, above all other evidences, witnesses to the vital connection between sacrifice and sacrament. The truth of the Real Presence demands that the Body of the Lord reserved shall not be severed from the Body of the Lord in the eucharistic Liturgy. We do all eat the same spiritual Food and drink the same spiritual Drink. We, the faithful of Christ, gather round one altar and one table. The one Body of Christ gives meaning to the altar and to the table. Through the act of transubstantiation it remains and persists as the sacramental embodiment of everything which the great act of sacrifice can accomplish. The sacrifice gives the meaning and the value to the Banquet. The Banquet is the completion of the sacrifice, and they who communicate most devoutly offer the sacrifice most effectually.

XXIX. THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

II. The Sacred Vessels and Linens

"But let all things be done decently and according to order."—I. Cor. xiv, 40.

SYNOPSIS.—The Mass is a banquet sacrificial in nature; the vessels used bespeak a banquet and a sacrifice. The vessels—they are especially chosen and consecrated. The chalice—its material, form; consecration—purpose; the paten; the ciborium; pyx. Various cloths—their use and meaning.

The Mass is a sacrificial banquet. Consequently, the vessels and linen used for it will, on the one hand, imply a meal or supper, and, on the other hand, will imply a sacrifice. They will be seen to be those of an ordinary Eastern meal: a cup, a plate, and a cloth; and they will be seen to be specially chosen and set aside for a sacred purpose. They are made of special material, and consecrated or blessed with special prayers. They are destined to contain the Blessed Sacrament and to be used ceremoniously in the service of the holy Sacrifice.

The cup is spoken of as the chalice. According to one gospel, our Lord used this very word to signify His Precious Blood. By a figure of speech He named the vessel to denote that which the vessel contained. "This is the chalice, the New Testament is in my Blood, which shall be shed for you." The Christian Church has retained this word, too, in her form of consecration. She does not say: "This is my Blood," but: "This is the chalice of my Blood." The cup set apart for the purpose, therefore, must be of the most precious material compatible with the efficient service of the sacred meal. The Church does not leave it altogether to individual taste. She ordains that, if possible, it should be made of gold. It may be made of silver, but then the inside, the part which directly touches the sacred elements, must be gilt. Further, if a particular church can not afford so costly a chalice, then it may have one in which the base and stem may be of any metal, provided it be solid, clean, and becoming; but the actual cup must be silver with gilt

on the inside. Sometimes, in cases of extreme poverty, this cup may be made of a composition of lead and silver, but always with a gilt surface to come in contact with the sacred species. Thus, we can readily understand the custom of offering chalices to the Holy Father for his jubilee. They are wanted for the Sacrificial Banquet. They are sent to very poor parishes in various parts of the world.

In the early Church glass chalices were probably used, and continued to be in use even so late as the fifth century. But as the faithful grew in the faith, they acquired a deeper reverence for the sacred mysteries, and they used more costly vessels. There was also a hygienic consideration in the development of the use of the chalice. Thus, there is a canon in the Law of the Church dating at least from the time of Eratian, which says: "Let the chalice of the Lord be at least of silver, if not of gold. But if any one be too poor, let him, in any case, have a chalice of tin. Let not the chalice be made of copper or brass, because from the action of the wine it produces rust, which occasions sickness. But let none presume to sing Mass with a chalice of wood or glass."

The chalice must be consecrated by a bishop. It is anointed on the inside with chrism, and appropriate prayers are said. From these prayers we gather the mystical signification which has grown up around the chalice. The bishop prays that God may send His blessing on the sacred vessel and that by the grace of the Holy Spirit it may become a new sepulchre for the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The plate which is used to receive the consecrated Host is called the paten. This has been in use probably from the time of the institution of the holy Eucharist. Notice primarily, it is a vessel of a sacred meal. In earlier times the Communion of the faithful was distributed directly from large patens, which were called "ministeriales." Being destined for direct contact with the blessed Sacrament, it should be made of the same material as the chalice. If it is made of anything else but gold, it should be gilt on the inside. It should have a thin and sharp edge, so that the priest may be able to collect the particles easily. It should not be ornamented in any way at least on the concave side, but it may have a small cross near the edge, to show where it is to be kissed by the celebrant. The mystical signification of the paten is gathered from the prayers which the bishop says at its consecration. He prays that the paten

may be sanctified, so that on it may be broken the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who chose to be offered on the Cross. Another prayer includes the paten with the chalice, as signifying a new sepulchre.

The ministerial paten has been superseded by the ciborium. The ciborium is a covered chalice in which the consecrated hosts are kept. It has an arched cover surmounted by a cross. From this cover it derives its name. The ciborium originally was what we now understand by a baldacchino. Its use was to cover and protect the altar, to sustain the curtains which were drawn around, to support the cross which was placed on the top of the ciborium long before it was introduced on the altar, and for the reservation of the blessed Sacrament. The blessed Sacrament was placed in a golden box of the form of a dove. This was called a "pyx," and was suspended from the ciborium, directly beneath the cross. Formerly the blessed Sacrament was reserved only for the sick. But in later times it was reserved also for the faithful. And it was this later custom which caused the pyx, the ciborium and the ministerial paten to be combined into one vessel. The word "pyx" is still the official name for the ciborium. But, commonly speaking, pyx is the name given to a smaller box in which the blessed Sacrament is carried to the sick. Both the ciborium and the pyx may be made of any metal, but if made of any other metal than gold or silver, they must be gilt inside. They may not be made of wood, glass, or ivory. They are not consecrated, but they are blessed by a bishop or priest with special faculties. As long as either a ciborium or a pyx contains the blessed Sacrament it must be covered with a white veil, which may be embroidered with gold or silver. The veil is the sign that the blessed Sacrament is present. Both pyx and ciborium are blessed under the form of benediction of a tabernacle. From it we gather that its primary use was the preservation and not the distribution of the blessed Sacrament. "Almighty and everlasting God, we suppliantly beseech Thy divine majesty, that Thou wouldst deign to dedicate with the grace of Thy benediction this vessel made for reserving the Body of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ."

After the sacred vessels the next obvious thing in preparation for a sacred meal is the table-cloth. The corporal is a development of an original table-cloth. It is the square piece of linen on which are placed all the sacred vessels, and, during a part of the Mass, the Sacred Host itself. It takes its size from the size of the altar.

Usually it is about twenty inches square. It should be made of white linen or hemp, and should have no embroidery whatsoever. The edges may have some fine lace, and there may be a small cross about an inch from the front edge, but these had far better be left off. The corporal is the sacred table-cloth for the Sacrificial Banquet. In earlier times it used to be so large as to cover the whole altar, and it was the duty of two deacons to lay it out. It was also so broad that it could be used, and was used, to fold over the chalice from behind. This custom of covering the chalice with a fold of the corporal is still kept up by the Carthusians. Consequently, at their Mass, there is only a very slight elevation of the chalice after the consecration. The mystical signification of the corporal is the winding sheet in which Christ's Body was wrapped by Joseph of Arimathea.

The pall is the small piece of linen, stiffened with cardboard, which is used to cover the chalice. As has been said, it was not originally distinct from the corporal. Its separate use dates from about the eleventh century. Its upper side may be ornamented with embroidery or painting in any color except black. It may have on it some emblem of the Sacred Passion, but it should not have a representation of the Sacred Heart, or of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, either conjointly or separately. Since the pall was originally part of the corporal, it has the same form of blessing and bears the same mystical signification. It should be so made that it can be easily washed. It is handled much more frequently than the corporal, and thus becomes soiled more quickly.

The purificator or mundatory is a piece of white linen used for drying the fingers and for cleansing the chalice and the paten. It is of comparatively recent origin. A little cross is worked on it to distinguish it from a similar towel used at the *lavabo*.

The veil is the covering which is placed on the chalice and paten from the time the priest leaves the sacristy until the offertory, and from the Communion until the priest returns to the sacristy. Its origin is quite unknown and may possibly be found in pre-Christian times.

The burse is the square case in which the priest puts the corporal when it is not being used. It dates from the twelfth century.

XXX. THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

III. The Preparation

"Thou hast prepared a table before me."—Ps. xxii, 5.

SYNOPSIS.—What is meant by the Mass of the Catechumens? Why was it so called? This section of the Mass is a preparation for the important part. The whole Church offers the Mass—priest and people pray together for each other. The essential note of the general preparation is propitiation. The particular preparation takes in the Introit, Kyrie, Gloria, Collects, Epistle and Gospel—the purpose of each and the purpose of the whole.

The first part of the Mass, from the beginning to the offertory, does not strictly belong to the Sacrifice. It partakes more of the nature of a preparation. It is very old. In the earlier part of its history it was performed sometimes with the Mass, sometimes without it. It was a kind of vigil in which the faithful prepared for the holy Eucharist by singing psalms, reading holy Scripture and listening to a sermon. Its modern equivalent is the office of Matins and Lauds. It was called the Mass of the Catechumens, because the catechumens were allowed to assist at it, but had to leave at the end of it. The Mass proper was called the Mass of the Faithful, for they alone had the right to share in the essential mysteries. This again emphasizes the fact that the Sacrifice is a banquet, that the chief and primary way of sharing in the Sacrifice is by going to holy Communion. We must always be on our guard, therefore, against the supposition that it is only the priest who offers the sacrifice. He offers the Sacrifice in the person of Christ and in the name of the people. It is the whole Church who offers the Mass, Christ as the head, the priest as His minister, and the faithful in union with Christ. Hence it is always better to follow the words of the Mass rather than spiritual reading or private devotions.

Since all of us then are going to offer the Mass with Christ our High Priest, we all begin together with the common sign of Christ and Christians—we make the sign of the Cross. All the work of our sanctification is due to the action of the Blessed Trinity. In the Mass, then, as in all other religious ceremonies, we begin by

invoking the name of the Blessed Trinity. We cross ourselves in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Next there follow an antiphon and a psalm. Antiphon means that which is chanted alternately, and refers originally to the custom of choirs chanting the psalms, one side taking one verse and the other side the next. Now it has a more restricted meaning and signifies a form of words, scriptural or otherwise, which is supposed to give the leading idea of the psalm. In the antiphon and psalm at the beginning of Mass, the verses are recited alternately by the priest and the server, the server on behalf of the faithful. Even in the Jewish dispensation this psalm was used as a preparation before going to the altar. Its explanation and appropriateness are seen merely from its recitation. "I will go to the altar of God, to God who giveth joy to my youth. Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from the nation that is not holy; from the unjust and deceitful man deliver me. Since Thou, O God, art my strength, why hast Thou cast me off? And why do I go sorrowful while the enemy afflicteth me? Send forth Thy truth and Thy faith; they have conducted me, and brought me to Thy holy mount and into Thy tabernacle. And I will go unto the altar of God; to God who giveth joy to my youth. I will praise Thee on the harp, O God, my God; why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou disquiet me? Hope in God, for I will still praise Him, the salvation of my countenance and my God." Then follow the *Gloria* and a repetition of the antiphon; we refer all our service to the glory of God and sum up the thoughts of the psalm in its one main idea.

One of the ends of the eucharistic sacrifice is propitiation for sin. The children of God are going to take a meal with their heavenly Father, by which they are going to express their sorrow for having offended Him, and by which He is going to assure them of His forgiveness. They get ready, then, by confession. In the most ancient assemblies of the Christians there was always this mutual confession of sin. Our present *Confiteor* dates, substantially, from the eighth century. We confess to God, to the saints, and to each other. The priest confesses to the people, and the people beseech God to absolve him. The people confess to the priest, and the priest beseeches God to absolve them. In both cases, however, it is an absolution only by way of supplication. It is not judicial as in the Sacrament of Penance. The priest is one of the society of the faithful. Together with the people he approaches the altar as a peni-

tent sinner. Both priest and people have need of the prayers of each other. The priest asks in the name of the Church for absolution for the people, and the people, in the name of the Church, ask for absolution for the priest. Thenceforward priest and people pray together. The priest does not ask for pardon, absolution and remission of "your sins," but of "our sins." Even in the secret prayer, as he ascends the steps of the altar, he prays that all may be worthy to enter with pure minds into the Holy of Holies.

In the early Church it was the custom to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice on the tombs of the martyrs. That custom now survives in the Catholic altar. The altar stone has a receptacle in which relics of martyrs are placed. The receptacle is called the sepulchre. When the priest arrives at the altar therefore, he kisses it out of reverence for the sacred relics. He prays secretly: "We beseech Thee, O Lord, by the merits of Thy saints, whose relics are here, and of all the saints, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to forgive me all my sins."

Thus far we have examined the general and liturgical preparation. for Mass. Now we come to the particular preparation. It begins with the Introit. "Introit" means "entrance." At the present time the Introit consists of a passage from Scripture, a verse of a psalm, and a *Gloria Patri.* It dates from the fourth century. Previously the Mass began with the *Kyrie Eleison.* Then a psalm was introduced. Our present Introit is the antiphon of that psalm. And just as an antiphon is the key to the character of the psalm, so the Introit is the key to the character of the Mass. It varies with the season or the feast. Thus, for instance, the Introit for Corpus Christi begins: "And He fed them with the fat of wheat." That for Trinity Sunday begins: "Blessed be the Holy Trinity and undivided Unity."

Next comes the Kyrie Eleison. We are still crying for mercy in order that we may be in a manner worthy to share the sacrificial meal with the Eternal Father. "Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy upon us." Father, Son and Holy Ghost are each invoked three times. The Kyrie Eleison was formerly a long litany, something like our Litany of the Saints, in which supplication was made for all the needs of the Church.

At this point there should ordinarily follow some prayers, the collect or collects, suitable to the day. They are the natural consequence of the cry for mercy and are supposed to be attached to

the litany of which the Kyrie Eleison is an abridgment. But on a great feast-day, such as Christmas or Easter, the Church could not, as it were, contain her joy. So she broke forth almost unrestrainedly into her greatest hymn of praise, the *Gloria in Excelsis.* Amongst the primitive Christians it was the custom to pray, to speak, to sing, according to individual inspiration. Then the inspirational stage passed into an institutional stage; the faithful followed custom and law rather than their own personal tastes. The *Gloria in Excelsis* is almost the only piece of liturgy which has come down in its entirety from that inspirational period. It takes its theme from the song of the angels which the shepherds heard on the night of the Nativity, "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will." It consists of three strophes, the first addressed to God the Father, the second to Christ, the third to the Blessed Trinity. The last strophe is the true doxology or hymn of praise to God. The whole is called the "great doxology," to distinguish it from the *Gloria Patri,* which is know as the lesser doxology. From the time when it was first introduced into the Liturgy to the eleventh century it was sung by bishops on Sundays and festivals, and by priests only on Easter Sunday. Gradually the bishops' privilege was extended to priests. Now we have so many festivals that we have hardly any ferials, and the *Gloria* is said nearly every day.

The hymn dies away and the priest resumes the prayer. He kisses the altar and turns to the people, saying: *"Dominus vobiscum,"* "the Lord be with you." It is the ordinary salutation between priests and people. The people answer: "And with thy spirit." He is going to present their prayers to the Most High God, and so they acknowledge his greeting by wishing that God may be with his spirit whilst he formulates their prayers. He says or chants the prayers in a loud voice, and at the end the people say "Amen. So be it," as if to say: "That is just what we wanted to pray."

Our missal is exceedingly rich in beautiful collects. How is this? It comes from the way in which they were brought together. When the faithful of the early Church met for divine service, certain psalms were sung and passages from Scripture read. Then, towards the end of the service, a priest, deacon or other cleric was told off to improvise a prayer. It was to be a spontaneous expression of the impression made by the Word of God. Sometimes, of course, they were not so good; other times they were better. But whenever there was one which was remarkable for its spiritual insight,

beauty of language, or penetrating fervor, then it was written down and kept for the official Liturgy. Thus does the institution of an enduring Church gather up the experiences of past ages and apply them to the spiritual profit of the ages that are to come.

After prayer and praise there follows the instruction of the people. This consists ordinarily of two lessons, known as the Epistle and the Gospel. Sometimes, on certain vigils and ember days, there are three or more. Usually the Epistle is taken from the Letters of the Apostles. It may be taken from any part of the Bible except the psalms and the four gospels. When taken from the Old Testament it is usually a prophecy foretelling the mystery of the gospel. The reading of the Epistle and the Gospel is something more than a mere instruction. It is an act of devotion to the inspired Word of God. This distinction is seen from the custom of reciting or chanting them solemnly in the Latin language, and then afterwards of reading them in the language of the people and of supplementing them with a sermon. It was, moreover, the custom of reading the Scripture in the churches which led to the separation and selection of the canonical books from the apocryphal ones. Whenever a local church wanted to know whether a certain book was really inspired Scripture or not, it sent messengers around to the other churches to ask whether the book in question was read during divine service. The Holy Spirit thus chose the devotional life of the Church through which to preserve and keep the inspired Word. He does so yet. The Epistle is solemnly read, and at the end the people answer: *Deo Gratias.* We are grateful to Almighty God for the unspeakable gift of divine doctrine.

After the Epistle there follows the Gradual. It is so called from *gradus,* a step, because it was sung by the deacon as he went up the steps of a special pulpit (the ambo) to sing the gospel. The Gradual, with its Alleluia, is a form of song consisting of versicle and response. During Paschal time a second Alleluia is sung instead, to mark the joyousness of the season. From Septuagesima to Easter the Alleluia of the Gradual gives way to a psalm, called the "tract." The tract is so called because it is sung without a break, no responses and no antiphon. On special occasions hymns were interspersed which are now known as sequences. In the Middle Ages these hymns increased to an alarming extent, and as is usual in such matters, quality was sacrificed to quantity. Then the Church had to step in with her function of expurgation. Pope St. Pius

V., in the sixteenth century made a great sweep. The result is that now we have only five sequences, but they are five of the most beautiful hymns in existence, the *Victimae Paschali* for Easter, the *Veni Sante Spiritus* for Whitsuntide, the *Lauda Sion* for Corpus Christi, the *Stabat Mater* for the feast of Our Lady's Compassion, and the *Dies Irae* for Masses of the Dead.

The Gospel, of course, is the most important part of Scripture. The missal is carried from the less worthy to the more worthy side of the altar. The priest bows profoundly at the center and prays: "Almighty God, who didst with a burning coal purify the lips of the Prophet Isaias, cleanse also my heart and my lips, and of Thy merciful kindness vouchsafe to purify me, that I may worthily announce Thy holy Gospel, through Christ our Lord, Amen." And again: "May the Lord be in my heart and on my lips, that I may worthily and efficiently announce His Gospel." Then, going to the book, he exchanges the Christian salutation with the people, "The Lord be with you." "And with thy spirit," and signs with the sign of the Cross the Gospel, and his own forehead, lips, and breast. The Gospel for the day contains an event in the life of Christ. The people acknowledge this and say: "Praise be to Thee, O Christ." The priest kisses the book and asks that by that good news our sins may be blotted out.

This marks the end of the liturgical preparation and introduction to the Holy Sacrifice. At this point, in the early Church, the catechumens, those who had not been baptized, were dismissed. The sacred mysteries were for the faithful and had to be kept secret from the heathen. Thus this part of the service was called the Mass of the Catechumens. The key to its right understanding is to remember that originally it was not part of the Mass at all but simply a vigil assembly by itself. Its purpose was not for sacrifice or for communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. Its aim was to chant the praises of God in psalms and hymns, to pray for the faithful and the different needs of the Church, and to give and receive instruction by hearing the Bible read and explained in the form of a sermon. By remembering this we are able to explain many otherwise obscure passages in the Mass. We are also able to see how much of our devotional life is sanctified by the Mass. Praise, prayer and the study of the divine Word are all united with the Holy Sacrifice, serving first as a preparation for it, and eventually being hallowed and made fruitful by it.

XXXI. THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

IV. The Offertory

"I have seen with great joy thy people, which are here present, offer Thee their offerings."—I. Paral. xxix, 17.

SYNOPSIS.—The Sacrifice begins at the offertory. This is a prayer and an action. The position of the Creed. Wine and water needed for the Mass. The custom in former times of the people bringing their offerings. The preparation of the chalice. Meaning of the water mixed with the wine. The meaning of the other ceremonies.

Strictly speaking, the Sacrifice begins at the offertory. The Mass is not merely or even chiefly a form of vocal prayer. It is an action. We should express the truth better if, as is done in some countries, we spoke of "assisting at Mass" rather than "hearing Mass." It is an action which may be divided into six parts or movements: the offertory, the giving of thanks, the consecration, the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the breaking of the Sacred Host, and the Communion. In this consideration we shall confine our attention to the offertory. The Creed is a connecting link between the Mass of the Catechumens and the Mass of the Faithful. It looks backward to the Epistle and Gospel, being an act of faith in God's word; it looks forward to the Holy Sacrifice, being an act of faith in Christ's Redemption. It is only recited on certain days.

Now, with regard to the offertory, let us say at once what we said of the whole Mass—the offertory is an action. The form of words which is usually called the offertory is but a part or an accompaniment of the action. The Mass is a sacrificial banquet, and for a banquet bread and wine are wanted. It is the duty of the faithful to provide the bread and wine. In the early Church they brought these things with them, together with other gifts, when they came to Mass. More, indeed, was brought than was needful for the Sacrifice. A small part, therefore, was set aside for that purpose, whilst the rest was divided amongst the clergy, the servers, the widows and the poor. Very soon, too, in the history of the Church,

a mystic signification was attached to the action. The gifts of bread, wine and other things signified that the faithful had a real and personal part in the Sacrifice. They had given up a part of their substance; they had offered it to God in acknowledgment of His supreme dominion; they expressed it to propitiate Him for their sins; but they knew that their little sacrifice would have no value unless offered in union with the Sacrifice of Christ. The faithful, therefore, came up to the altar, laid down their gifts, and returned to their places in church. This proceeding naturally took some time and frequently caused confusion. So, in order that everything might be done decently and in order, it was arranged that psalms should be sung as the people passed to and fro. In course of time these psalms were curtailed until only the antiphon was left; and that antiphon is now sung as our present offertory. This explains why, sometimes, the words of the offertory do not necessarily refer to the offering. On the fourth Sunday of Advent, for instance, the offertory is the Hail Mary. It also helps to explain the meaning of the *Oremus* at the beginning of the offertory. The priest says, "Let us pray," but he does not pray—he reads an antiphon. In the ancient Liturgy, however, there was a prayer at this point. The people, before offering their gifts, either knelt upright with their arms stretched out and their eyes turned towards heaven, or prostrated themselves upon the ground and prayed in silence. The priest then took up their prayer and offered it in their name. The offertory words in the Mass of the Dead are most probably a relic of this prayer. This, then, is a most fitting opportunity of renewing our special intentions for which we desire to offer the Sacrifice. This also is a fitting time for the collection to be made. What we give should be given in the spirit of sacrifice; it should be something of which we feel the loss; and it should be offered in union with the sacrifice of Christ.

The priest next proceeds to make the special offering of bread and wine for the Sacrifice. This offering of bread and wine, however, must not be confused with the great offering of the sacramental Body and Blood of Christ. It only means that the Church offers the bread and wine, so that at the proper moment, at the words of consecration, Our Lord may change them into His Body and Blood. The priest then uncovers the chalice and paten, takes the paten with the host into his hands and offers it. The prayer which he says bears its own explanation: "Accept, O holy Father,

almighty, eternal God, this immaculate Host, which I, Thy unworthy servant, offer unto Thee my living and true God, for mine innumerable sins and offenses, and for my negligences, and for all here present; as also for all faithful Christians, both living and dead, that it may be profitable for mine own and for their salvation unto life eternal. Amen." The Mass is of infinite value. Whether there are few people present or many, there is always more than sufficient grace ready for all. We share the benefits of the Mass according to the devotion which we exercise in corresponding with the graces offered us.

The priest next prepares the chalice. He pours in wine, which must be the juice of the grape. Then he adds a few drops of water. The mingling of wine and water commemorates the blood and water which flowed from the side of Christ whilst He hung on the Cross, and consequently implies all the mystical signification of that mystery on Calvary. Especially does it signify the union of Jesus Christ with the faithful. All this is beautifully expressed in the prayer which the priest says in blessing the water: "O God, who, in creating human nature, didst wonderfully dignify it, and hast still more wonderfully renewed it, grant that by the mystery of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of His Divinity, who vouchsafed to become partaker of our humanity, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord."

The priest then goes to the middle of the altar and offers the chalice, as he did the paten. Holding it in his hands, and fixing his eyes on the crucifix, he says: "We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the Chalice of salvation, beseeching Thy clemency, that, in the sight of Thy divine Majesty, it may ascend with the odor of sweetness, for our salvation, and for that of the whole world." Then he makes the sign of the Cross with the chalice, puts it on the corporal, and covers it with the pall. He recalls the history of the three holy children in the fiery furnace, and, using the words of their prayer, he also prays: "In the spirit of humility, and with a contrite heart, let us be received by Thee, O Lord; and grant that the sacrifice we offer in Thy sight this day may be pleasing to Thee, O Lord God." Notice that in both these prayers the priest identifies himself with the people. It is *we* who offer the chalice of salvation, *we* who offer the sacrifice. The reference is not, as some writers say, to the deacon at High Mass. The deacon need not be a priest at all. The sacrifice is offered by the priest and people together. It is

offered by the whole Church, by Christ, the priest, and the people, each however in a different way.

Next, the Holy Spirit is asked to bless the Sacrifice. The priest, raising his hands, joining them, and making the sign of the Cross over the Host and Chalice, prays: "Come, O Sanctifier, almighty eternal God, and bless this Sacrifice, prepared to Thy holy Name." This prayer is the subject of much controversy amongst liturgical writers. Does it merely ask a blessing on the gifts of bread and wine prepared for sacrifice, or does it invoke the Holy Spirit to come and perform the great work of transubstantiation? There is no reason why we should not, for the sake of our devotion, include the second meaning in the prayer; but I think that originally the simpler meaning was all that was intended. The offertory is not an offering of the Victim of the Sacrifice, but merely an offering of the material gifts destined for sacrifice. This view also seems to be confirmed by the ceremony which follows, namely that of washing the hands. Gifts of all kinds had been brought by the faithful, the priest had been busy receiving them and arranging them about the altar; and then, naturally, he wanted to wash his hands before returning to his book and his prayers. In order to keep himself recollected he said the psalm: "I will wash my hands among the innocent, and will encompass Thy altar, O Lord." The ceremony thus came to have a mystical meaning, and for this reason it is retained in the Liturgy. St. Thomas suggests that we wash the tips of the fingers to signify that when we stand before the altar we should be free from even the slightest stain of sin.

The prayer of offering is continued. The next part, however, is less ancient than the foregoing. It marks the introduction of the saints. They have a share in the honor of the sacrifice.

At last comes the secret prayer. This is formally and strictly the prayer of offering. As such it is the most ancient part of the prayers which accompany the action. It varies according to the season or feast. But always, or nearly always, it refers expressly to the offering of the gifts of the faithful. Before the priest says it, however, he turns once more to the people—and this is for the last time, until after his communion—and reminds them that the sacrifice is theirs as well as his. *Orate fratres,* "Pray, brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty." And the people reply through the server: "May the Lord receive the sacrifice from thy hands, to the praise and glory

of His name, and to that of all His holy Church. Amen." The prayer which follows is said in a low voice, and hence it is called the secret. It usually contains two ideas, an offering of gifts to God and an asking for gifts in return. The more ancient and the more simple they are, so much the more clearly do they express the root meaning of an exchange of gifts between man and God. We see it best in the secrets for Lent, as for instance: "O Lord, may Thou be appeased by the gifts which we offer, and do Thou defend us from all dangers." Or, again: "Look graciously, we beseech Thee, O Lord, on the gifts which we dedicate to Thee; so that they may be always pleasing to Thee and salutary to us." In fact, each may be said to be a variant of one elemental form: "O Lord, may the offerings which we now make in union with the sacrifice of Thy divine Son be accepted by Thee, and may they obtain for us all good gifts both for body and soul."

Thus the first action of the Mass comes to an end. To understand it aright we must remember that it is primarily an action and not a form of vocal prayer. The prayers which accompany the action all go to show that the offertory is an offering of material gifts destined for sacrifice, not the offering of the great Sacrifice itself. It is in a sense a sacrifice in so far as it is a giving up to God a portion of our good. But this small sacrifice has to be united with the great Sacrifice in order that it may have value in the sight of God. To-day the priest places upon the altar only bread and wine sufficient for the sacrificial meal. But this is symbolical of all other gifts which a Christian people has to offer to its God. The offertory, then, is a fitting opportunity to renew all offerings of personal service. Whether my devotion consists of renouncing worldly possessions, or of giving up my time for the care of the poor, of occupying myself in a life of prayer, I know that the lesser sacrifice may be made ministrant to the greater Sacrifice. Thus most effectually do I pay my vows to the Lord in the sight of all His people.

XXXII. THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

V. From the Preface to the Consecration

"And taking bread, He gave thanks."—Luke xxii, 19.

SYNOPSIS.—Origin and meaning of the Preface. Canon. Its meaning and contents. Prayer for the Church; for the living; commemoration of the Saints; the Blessed Virgin; Apostles; Martyrs. Meaning of the hands held over the oblata. Final blessing showing relation between Sacrament and Sacrifice.

In this consideration, we shall confine our attention to the preface and to those prayers of the canon which lead up to the consecration. The bread and wine have been blessed and are now ready for the sacrifice. The priest invites the people to go in with him to the eucharistic supper. With his face turning to the altar, he calls to the people again: "The Lord be with you," and they answer, "And with thy spirit." He becomes more fervent and they respond to his prompting. "Lift up your hearts." "We lift them up unto the Lord." Let us give thanks unto our Lord God." "It is meet and just so to do." One of the four great ends of the holy Sacrifice is to give thanks; and the preface is the place where this thanks is expressed in so many words. But the words themselves are not the act of thanksgiving. The real and efficacious act of thanksgiving is the whole action of sacrifice. We cannot, however, do everything at once; and so we formulate our thanksgiving by way of introduction to the canon. That is why this prayer is called the preface.

The preface was originally an improvised prayer, made up spontaneously by the priest, but always about one particular theme: it was always an act of thanksgiving. It was this prayer which gave the name of eucharist to the blessed Sacrament, for eucharist means thanks. Most probably it has a prechristian origin, being a modified form of the prayer made by the head of the family at the paschal banquet. It was the grace (gratias, eucharist) before meals. The Christian priest takes the place of the head of the family and says

the prayer: "It is truly meet and just, right and salutary that we should always and in all places give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty eternal. God, through Christ our Lord through whom the angels praise thy Majesty, the dominations adore it, the powers tremble before it. The heavens and the heavenly virtues, and the blessed Seraphim in common jubilee do glorify it with Him. In union with whom we beseech Thee to ordain that our voices be admitted, saying in suppliant accord, holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts. Full are the heavens and earth of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." Thus the preface is a sort of transition from the old covenant to the new. And because the old has given way to the new, therefore we sing the "Thrice Holy" with the Seraphim, the "Benedictus" and the "Hosanna," as did the children of the Hebrews who greeted our Lord on His entry into Jerusalem.

This brings us to the canon of the Mass. A canon means a fixed rule. This part of the Mass does not, on the whole, change with the seasons. A rare exception is made on certain days, when a few words are added to the prayers *Communicantes* and *Hanc igitur.* The canon is said in a low voice. The primitive reason for this was, most probably, in order that the priest and people might be recollected at so solemn a time. A mystical signification, however, has been given to it, namely, that the silence represents the extreme patience of our Lord as He hung on the Cross.

The canon, above any other part of the Mass, is an action. It is the great action by which the Sacrifice of Calvary is made visible and present to Christians throughout all time. One part of the prayer has the title *infra actionem,* "within the action." This title originally only stood before the prayer "Communicantes" placed at the beginning and outside the canon for the special feasts of Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost. On such occasions the Church wanted to make special reference to the corresponding mysteries, yet at the same time was reluctant to interfere with the words of the canon. So she had the words written outside the action, but directed them to be said within the action. Later the title was also transferred to the prayer within the canon.

Keeping clearly before our minds then the fact that the canon is an action, we may go on to look at the words which accompany

the action. The first is a prayer for the Church. The priest raises his hands and looks at the crucifix, then lays his hands on the altar and makes a profound reverence. It is the fitting gesture for the prayer he is about to say. He humbly asks a further blessing on the gifts destined for sacrifice, he prays that the offering may bring peace to the Church, and lastly he makes a special remembrance of the reigning Pope, the bishop of the diocese, and of all those who believe and profess the Catholic faith. In blessing the sacrificial elements he crosses them three times. He blesses them first as "these gifts" in acknowledgment that we receive them from God; then as "these presents," signifying that we give them back to God; and, thirdly, as "these holy and unspotted sacrifices," in anticipation of the words of consecration. In praying for the Church, he follows the lines of our Lord's prayer for His disciples: "My Father, keep them in thy name, whom thou hast given me that they may be one, as we also are one, . . . And not for them only do I pray, but for all those also who through their word shall believe in me, that they all may be one."

Next comes the remembrance of the living. It sets before the faithful the truly Catholic nature of the Church. We must not be absorbed wholly in ourselves. We pray then for those for whom the Mass is specially offered. In the early Church the names were written on diptychs or tablets, and whilst the priest made the memento silently, the deacon turned round and read them to the people. In later times the tablets were laid on the altar and the priest prayed over them. A revival of this is the custom now prevalent of putting written intentions on the altar every first Friday of the month. After the special intentions, we pray for all who are present at Mass, especially those who have brought offerings, and for those who are our friends and benefactors. "Be mindful, O Lord, of thy servants , men and women (here the names are given), and of all here present, whose faith and devotion are known unto Thee; for whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee, this Sacrifice of praise for themselves, and for all near or dear to them; for the redemption of their souls, for the hope of salvation and of safety, and who offer to Thee, the eternal, living and true God, these their vows."

Closely connected with the remembrance of the living is the commemoration of the saints. The Church militant must be helped by the Church triumphant. The prayer is rather a continuation of

the previous one. We have prayed for the living who offer to God their vows, and so we continue: "Communicating with, and honoring in the first place, the memory of the glorious and ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ." The standard of prayer is the standard of belief, *lex orandi, lex credendi;* and so this prayer becomes one of the most important evidences of ancient belief in the unique position of our Lady above all the other saints. The prayer is at the very least 1,300 years old. An attempt is now being made to have St. Joseph put in the canon. But the Church is most reluctant to make any additions whatsoever. Certainly the voice of history is against St. Joseph. History, however, is not the only criterion by which these things are judged. The selective principle is the life of prayer and holiness. If the Church is convinced that the placing of St. Joseph in the canon is needful for its devotional life it will place him there. For the present, however, we must believe that St. Joseph is more honored by not being in the canon. After our blessed Lady, we commemorate twelve apostles, twelve martyrs, and then all the saints in general. We believe in the communion of saints, we believe in the value of the good works, the holy lives, and the sacrificial deaths of God's chosen ones, yet not apart from the sacrificial death of Christ on Calvary. Therefore, it is that we associate the martyrs with Christ in the sacrifice of the Mass. Their sufferings together with His are commemorated at our altar.

Hanc igitur: "Therefore we beseech Thee, O Lord, to be appeased and to accept this oblation of our service, as also of Thy holy family." The priest here holds his hands over the bread and wine, his thumbs laid one over the other in the form of a cross. He signifies thereby that he is transferring the sins of the world to the body of Christ. In the old law when a man offered sacrifice he put his hands on the head of the victim, meaning that the victim was to bear his sins. This figure, realized on Calvary, is now mystically re-enacted when the priest stretches his hands over the chalice and makes the oblation of the service of a Christian people. Propitiation is the predominating note of the action. "Dispose our days in Thy peace, command us to be delivered from eternal damnation, and to be numbered in the flock of Thy elect. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

Lastly, all these thoughts are summed up and expressed in a final blessing. God is asked to bless, approve and ratify the offering.

Three signs of the Cross are made over the chalice and paten together to signify that the power which is exercised through the words of consecration comes from the blessed Trinity. Transubstantiation, like all other actions of God outside Himself, is wrought by all three Persons together. But this blessing, approved and ratification is in order that the Victim sacrificed may be our food. The Mass is a sacrificial banquet. The priest then makes two more signs of the Cross, one over the bread and the other over the wine, and prays that the offering may become to us the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus, as we approach the most solemn moment of the Mass the Church emphasises the doctrine of the intimate relationship between Sacrifice and Sacrament. We may not say that sacrifice consists essentially in communion, but we must say that communion is the most effective way of sharing in the Sacrifice.

XXXIII. THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

VI. From the Consecration to the End of the Canon

"Do this for a commemoration of me."—Luke xxii, 19.

SYNOPSIS.—The consecration and adoration of the Sacred Host. The elevation owes its origin to controversy with regard to the moment of transubstantiation. The elevation of the Chalice. The offering of the Victim. Mention of the types. The Epiclesis. Who offers the Sacrifice? The memento for the dead. What is offered? The concluding doxology.

The Mass now assumes more distinctly the features of a divine drama. We approach the account of the institution of the Blessed Sacrament in which the words of consecration find place. The idea of a sacrificial banquet is here most clearly realized. The priest performs the very actions and says the very words which Christ did and said at the Last Supper. He takes the bread into his hands, lifts his eyes to heaven, and recites the gospel narrative, together with other details which have come down by tradition: "Who, the day before He suffered, took bread into His holy and venerable hands, and with His eyes lifted up towards heaven, to God, His almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee, did bless, break, and give to His disciples, saying: 'Take and eat ye all of this: For this is my Body.'"

Under the form of bread alone the whole of Christ's body, soul and divinity is now present on the altar. The priest is the first to adore. He then raises the consecrated Host as high as he conveniently can and shows it to the people. This high elevation is of comparatively recent origin. It came into practise through a theological controversy in the twelfth century. Many books say that it was a protest against the heresy of Berengarius, who denied transubstantiation. But, as a matter of fact, it was not introduced until a century after Berengarius's death. The real reason for it was that some theologians had said that transubstantiation did not take place until after the consecration of the wine. The Church, however, emphasized the law of belief by making it the law of

prayer. The priest must hold up the Host to be seen of the people. Their looking at it is an act of adoration. The custom is also prescribed for us to-day. The rubic of the Missal says that the priest shall show the Host to the people. Our present Holy Father has expressed a wish that the faithful shall look at the Host when it is so held up. He has also granted an indulgence of seven years and seven times forty days to those who do this, and at the same time say: "My Lord and my God." The proper ritual, then, for the faithful at the time of consecration is to look at the Host and then bow the head. When the custom was first introduced it was taught in verse: "And when they hear the bell ring—To that holy sakering,—Teach them to kneel down, both young and old,—And both their hands up to hold,—And say then in this manner,—Fair and softly without noise:—Jesu Lord, welcome Thou be—In form of bread I Thee see;—Jesu, for Thy Holy Name—Shield me to-day from sin and shame." Or, again: "When the time is near of sakering—A little bell men use to ring—Then shalt thou do reverence—To Jesu Christ's own presence—That may lose all baleful bands—Kneeling, hold up both thy hands—And so the levation thou behold,—For this is He that Judas sold—And since was scourged and done on Rood—And for mankind there shed His Blood." Thus, if the elevation be interpreted as an offering of the sacred Host to the Eternal Father, or as a representation of the raising of Christ on the Cross, these significations are quite secondary. If Christ is thus offered to the Father, it is in order that the faithful may see the offering and take part in it by adoring the Victim. If Christ is thus represented as raised on the Cross, it is in order that the people may see their Redeemer and adore Him.

The divine drama proceeds. The priest next takes the chalice in his hand, and blessing it, recites the account of our Lord's action at the Last Supper. "In this manner, after He had supped, taking also this excellent chalice into His holy and venerable hands, and giving Thee thanks, He blessed and gave to His disciples, saying: "Take and drink ye all of this: For this is the chalice of My Blood of the new and eternal testament: the mystery of faith: which shall be shed for you and for many, to the remission of sins. As often as ye do these things, ye shall do them in remembrance of Me." The priest, again, is the first to adore Christ now present under the form of wine, present thus as to His body, soul and divinity. Then

the chalice is raised on high, so that the people may see it and adore the contents. The custom of elevating and looking at the chalice did not come into practise until some time after the similar custom with the Host. Both elevations, however, are found in use at the end of the thirteenth century. The chalice signifies more particularly our Lord's Passion and the fruits thereof, as was suggested by our Lord when He said to the sons of Zebedee: "Can you drink the chalice which I am going to drink?" Therefore it is that the commemoration of the Passion is expressed in the consecration of the Wine rather than in the consecration of the Bread.

The formal offering of the holy Victim to the Eternal Father takes place during the next prayer. The prayer is called the *anamnesis,* which means "remembrance." We call to memory the Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord, and we offer the pure and holy Victim to God the Father. "Wherefore, O Lord, we Thy servants, as also Thy holy people, calling to mind the same blessed Passion of the same Christ Thy Son, our Lord, His Resurrection from the dead, and glorious Ascension into heaven, offer unto Thy most excellent Majesty, of Thy gifts and grants, a pure Victim, a holy Victim, an immaculate Victim, the holy Bread of eternal life, and the chalice of everlasting salvation." Then the most perfect of the old types of this new Sacrifice are recalled, especially the sacrifice of Melchisedech. That sacrifice was a bloodless one of bread and wine, and so is an evidence that the new rite which it typified is also a real sacrifice. So the prayer continues: "Upon which vouchsafe to look with a propitious and serene countenance, and to accept them as Thou wert graciously pleased to accept the gifts of Thy just servant Abel, and the sacrifice of our Patriarch Abraham, and that which Thy high-priest Melchisedech offered to Thee, a holy Sacrifice and a spotless Victim."

We next come to one of the most mysterious parts of the Mass. It is the prayer which is usually called the *epiclesis. Epiclesis* means "a calling down." It is so named because of a supposed parallel with the Greek Liturgy, in which the Holy Ghost is called down to effect the work of sacrifice. Whether, however, this parallel is true or not is open to grave doubt. Certainly there is nothing in the prayer itself to imply a coming down. And much less ground is there for saying that the holy angel is Our Lord Himself. The faithful are at liberty, if it suits their devotion, to think of the holy angel as the Holy Ghost or as Jesus Christ. But most

probably the original intention of those who composed the prayer was that the angel was the angel of sacrifice who is spoken of in the Apocalypse. "And another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel." Now see how closely this imagery is followed in the Mass: "We must humbly beseech Thee, almighty God, let these offerings be carried by the hands of Thy holy angel to Thy altar on high, in the sight of Thy Divine Majesty, that as many of us as, by participating in this altar, shall receive the most sacred Body and Blood of Thy Son, may be filled with all heavenly blessing and grace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen." Of course, the sacrifice is offered and presented by Christ Himself, and, speaking absolutely, there is no need to ask God to accept it. But we must not forget that we all have a share in offering the sacrifice; and our share depends largely on our devotion. If we assist at the rite carelessly and with distraction, we have little share in the sacrifice. Therefore it is that we use this beautiful and inspired figure of the ascending angel and the altar on high to express our desire of sharing in the sacrifice to the utmost of our power. The Mass is not a merely mechanical or magical rite which brings forth its fruits regardless of the dispositions of the offerers. It is a moral act in which those who take part most devoutly derive graces most abundantly.

Next follows a prayer for the dead and for the living in anticipation of death. The formal remembrance of the living takes place before the consecration to signify that the living can have an active share in the sacrifice. But the remembrance of the dead is after the consecration; they do not offer the Mass, but have Mass offered for them. Hence there is a duty laid upon the living of seeing that the dead have Mass said for them. This special prayer was put in the Liturgy in the thirteenth century, and, as in the case of the remembrance of the living, the list of names of the dead was read out from the diptychs. The prayer reads: "Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants and handmaids [here the names are mentioned] who are gone before us with the sign of faith, and sleep in the sleep of peace. To these, O Lord, and to all that rest in Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light and peace. Through

the same Christ, our Lord. Amen." The prayer is a Catholic prayer; it makes remembrance first of special intentions, and then of the whole of the faithful departed. The living, too, are prayed for in view of their death, that they may eventually come to the fellowship of these saints. "And to us sinners, Thy servants, hoping in the multitude of Thy mercies, vouchsafe to grant some part and fellowship with Thy holy Apostles and Martyrs; with John, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Felicitas, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecily, Anastasia, and with all Thy Saints, into whose company we beseech Thee to admit us, not weighing our merits, but freely granting Thy pardon. Through Christ our Lord."

This brings us to the concluding prayer of the Canon: *Per quem haec omnia.* This remembrance of the dead is a prayer that has been inserted at a later date. This concluding prayer then does not follow logically upon it, but rather upon the prayer concerning the holy angel. We have asked that by receiving the most sacred Body and Blood of Christ we may be filled with all heavenly blessing and grace. So now we continue that idea thus: "By whom, O Lord, Thou dost always create, sanctify, quicken, bless and give all these good things." What is meant by "these good things?" When the prayer was composed it undoubtedly meant the various gifts of bread, wine, milk, honey, oil, fruit and other things which lay round about the altar. If the faithful wish, they may here let their thoughts go out to the cornfields and vineyards and ask God to bless and give us all these good things. But the priest, when saying these words, makes the sign of the Cross three times over the consecrated species. The words, then, must now also be applied to the sacred elements, but with careful interpretation. We may take it that God is asked to do all these things through Christ now present on the altar. The Mass is a sacrificial banquet in which we offer to God His own divine Son, and with that great offering all our own little offerings; it is also a banquet in which God gives to us the great Gift of the Body and Blood of His Son, and with that great Gift all the lesser gifts of food, shelter and raiment.

In sympathy with these ideas, we end with a doxology, or act of praise, to the Blessed Trinity. The priest takes the Sacred Host and makes three signs of the Cross with It over the chalice, saying: "Through Him and with Him and in Him to Thee God the Father Almighty in the unity of the Holy Ghost be all honor and glory,

forever and ever." After making the crosses he raises the Host and chalice slightly; this is the little elevation. Then the people, through the server, say: "Amen." It is a solemn acknowledgment that the priest has spoken in their name, and consequently it is an act of faith in the Real Presence. It marks the end of the canon of the Mass, and therefore is a ratification on the part of the people, of everything that has been done by the priest in performance of the great Action.

XXXIV. THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

VII. The Breaking of the Host and Communion

"Jesus took bread; and blessing, broke and gave to them."—Mark xiv, 22.

SYNOPSIS.—Place and significance of the Pater Noster. The breaking of the Host; its origin, meaning. The prayer for peace. The giving of the pax; its origin. The special preparatory prayers for Holy Communion; their value. The reason for the Domine Non Sum Dignus. The thanksgiving. Daily communion. Spiritual communion. Time for reception of communion. The communion and postcommunion. Last Gospel brings us back to the Incarnation; to eternity.

The "Our Father" forms the introduction to the action in which the Sacred Host is broken and distributed to the faithful. It has most probably been used in the Mass ever since the beginning, but it has not always been in its present place. St. Gregory the Great put it at the end of the canon, as he thought it was unfitting that the great action should not be sanctified by the prayer of Christ. Like the Creed, then, the "Our Father" looks both ways, backward toward the canon, forward toward the Communion. "Let us pray. Instructed by Thy precepts and following Thy divine institution, we dare to say: Our Father." Following on the last petition, there is a prayer which amplifies the idea: "But deliver us from evil. Amen." Thus closes the one, and then the other continues: "Deliver us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present, and to come; and by the intercession of the blessed and ever glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, together with Thy blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and Andrew, and all the Saints, mercifully grant peace in our days; that by the assistance of Thy mercy we may be always free from sin, and secure from all disturbance." Here the priest signs himself with the paten in signification that he hopes for the peace for which he prays. Then he kisses the paten out of love for the Blessed Sacrament through which he is to obtain this peace. The prayer closes with a doxology, during which is performed the ceremony of breaking the Host.

Our Lord, when He instituted the holy Eucharist, took bread, and broke it and gave it to His disciples. The breaking of the Host, therefore, is of divine ordinance. Our Lord's action is reproduced in the Mass. The Mass is a sacrificial banquet in which Christ gives His Body and Blood. Here again the connection between sacrifice and sacrament is emphasized. In the ancient Church at this point the deacon came forward and asked those to retire who were not going to communicate. The ceremony only dropped out when so few people came to Communion. Now, through the influence of Pope Pius X., we are returning to the more Christ-like idea. As part of the Sacrifice, the Host is broken in order that It may be given to the people. The thought of the action signifying Christ's violent death is quite secondary, and not altogether felicitous, for Christ's Body was not broken. Let us cling to the idea, then, that the breaking of the Host is a preparation for Communion.

In the Roman rite the Host is broken into three parts, one of which is dropped into the chalice. All the portions are consumed by the priest. In the ancient rite the Host was much larger than it is now, and one of the portions broken off was used for the Communion of the faithful. The faithful also partook of the chalice. The old custom was therefore more expressive than the present one in signifying that the faithful all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink. To-day, however, we make up in faith what is wanting in sight; we believe that under the form of bread we receive both the Body and the Blood of Christ. One part of the Host is dropped into the chalice to signify the unity of the Sacrament. And the unity of the Sacrament signifies the unity of the Christian people. The prayers which are said during the ceremony accentuate this unity. The priest has just been praying to be kept in peace and preserved from sin. Then he breaks the Host into three pieces and says: "Through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth God, world without end." With one portion of the Host he makes the sign of the Cross three times over the chalice and says: "May the peace of the Lord be always with you." The people reciprocate the good wish and say: "And with thy spirit."

Once more the priest expresses the doctrine that the fruits of the sacrifice come through Communion: "May this commingling and consecration of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ be to us that receive it effectual to eternal life." The peace of life, not

the peace of sleep, or the peace of death, is the heaven for which the Christian yearns. Henceforth, then, up to the actual Communion, the prayers speak chiefly of this peace.

We are now drawing near to Communion. We are to receive the Prince of Peace. Previously our prayers have been directed to God the Father. Now we address ourselves to God the Son, to welcome Him as the great Peacemaker. He is coming to set in order our faculties and passions. So we pray directly to Him: "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace." In Masses for the dead, instead of praying for peace, we pray for rest, everlasting rest. The holy souls are restless in their purgatory, yearning for the rest which shall come to them through the Passion of Christ, applied to them through the sacrifice of the Mass.

The prayer which follows belongs strictly to the breaking of the Host, not to the Communion. "Lord Jesus Christ, who saidst to Thy Apostles: 'Peace I leave to you, My peace I give unto you; look not on my sins but on the faith of Thy Church; and vouchsafe to it that peace and unity which is agreeable to Thy will; who liveth and reigneth God for ever and ever.'" (In High Mass there follows here the kiss of peace. It is now confined to the clergy. In the early church it was common amongst all the faithful, not only at Mass, but in all their assemblies. It fell out of custom as the numbers in the Christian community increased. In some countries even now the ceremony survives in a modified form. The kiss is distributed by means of a small golden plate, called the osculatorium or instrument of peace.)

The next two prayers are a special preparation for holy Communion. They are comparatively modern. They partake more of the nature of a private and personal devotion than of a liturgical and solemn prayer. Before they, and the prayer which precedes them, came into use, the "Our Father" was here said. The faithful prayed: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." Then the priest kissed the altar, which represented Christ, and passed on the kiss of peace to the ministers and the people. The kiss of peace was the sign of pardon and renovation of friendship. The faithful also prayed: "Give us this day our daily bread." In saying this, they applied it specially to holy Communion. But when St. Gregory the Great moved the "Our Father,"

as he said, to give greater dignity to the canon, then there arose a special need for prayers preparatory to holy Communion. The priest then looks at the Host, and for the moment is absorbed in his own devotions, for he is the first to receive holy Communion. "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who, according to the will of the Father, through the cooperation of the Holy Ghost, hast by Thy death given life to the world; deliver me by this, Thy most sacred Body and Blood, from all my iniquities and from all evils, and make me always adhere to Thy commandments, and never suffer me to be separated from Thee. (Who, with the same God the Father and Holy Ghost, livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.)"

The other prayer, it may be noticed, refers only to the Body of Christ. Liturgists are of opinion that there was formerly another prayer also which referred to the Blood of Christ, but which has now fallen out of use. "Let not the participation of Thy Body, O Lord Jesus Christ, which I, unworthy, presume to receive, turn to my judgment and condemnation; but through Thy goodness may it be to me a safeguard and remedy, both of soul and body. (Who, with God the Father, in unity with the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.)" There could be no better preparation for Communion than these prayers provided in the Liturgy. They are intimate, private, and personal, they are adapted to all sorts and conditions of the faithful, and at the same time they are approved by the Church and sanctified by their place in the Liturgy. Anyone who says them with ordinary attention and sincerity need have no scruples about his or her dispositions for holy Communion.

Before taking his own Communion the priest says: "I will take the Bread of heaven, and call upon the name of the Lord." Then he greets his sacramental Master with the same words that were used by the centurion of Capharnaum when Christ offered to go to his house to heal his servant. The greeting is repeated three times. The Church thereby emphasizes it; and the Church has need to emphasize it. How many of the faithful there are who stay away from Communion because, as they say, they are unworthy! Whereas, the Church considers this sense of unworthiness the very best disposition with which to approach holy Communion. The priest must acknowledge it for his own Communion, and three times again must acknowledge it for the Communion of the faithful:

"Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed." It is one of the most beautiful, and seemingly one of the most paradoxical principles of the spiritual life that the more *unworthy* you seem to yourself to be, the more worthy you really are. Your sin is a happy fault, it has won you so good and so great a Redeemer. Only as a professedly penitent sinner, then, does the priest say: "May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting. Amen."

He begins his thanksgiving even before he receives the chalice. "What shall I render to the Lord for all He has rendered unto me? I will take the chalice of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will call upon the Lord and praise Him, and I shall be saved from my enemies. The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to everlasting life. Amen." The same sentiments should also inspire the faithful. We must repeat it again and again—holy Communion is the most effectual way in which they can share in the offering of the sacrifice. And the same principle applies even to those Masses in which the people do not communicate sacramentally.

Daily sacramental Communion is the ideal which the Church holds up to her children. But whenever this is inconvenient, or wherever it is the custom to assist at a second Mass, then the faithful should unite themselves to the sacrifice by making a spiritual Communion. It is the Communion, either sacramental or spiritual, which completes the beauty and richness of the sacrifice. The people offer to God His own divine Son, and, at the same Banquet, they receive from God the same spiritual Food and tht same spiritual Drink.

The study of the Liturgy also throws light on the practise of receiving Communion outside Mass. The Sacraments are made for men, not men for the Sacraments. In case of grave necessity one ought to communicate when one can. But the proper time and place is after the priest's Communion in the Mass. It is Communion at this point which gives fulness of meaning to the Mass. It is therefore quite wrong to ask for Communion at the beginning of the Mass merely in order to have time for private devotions. For special reasons, good for the Church as a whole, the Pope sometimes orders the rosary to be said during Mass. At those times it is our duty to obey. But at other times it is not desirable to neglect the

words of the Mass for the sake of the rosary. Much less is it desirable to ask for Communion at the beginning of Mass so as to be able to say the rosary within the half hour. So, too, with the act of thanksgiving. A quarter of an hour from the time of Communion is the recognized practise. But if the pressure of domestic or business duties does not allow of this, it is better to make it up some time during the day, rather than to ensure it by asking for Communion at the beginning of Mass.

Belief in the Real Presence implies the need of deepest reverence for every particle of the Sacred Host, and for every drop of the Precious Blood. Consequently, the greatest care is taken in purifying the chalice, paten, and corporal. Whilst doing this the priest prays: "Grant, Lord, that what we have taken with our mouth, we may receive with a pure mind; and of a gift in time may it become unto us an eternal remedy." And again: "May Thy Body, O Lord, which I have received, and Thy Blood which I have drunk, cleave to my heart, and grant that no stain of sin may remain in me, who have been refreshed with pure and holy Sacraments."

The form of words known as the "Communion" is merely a relic of psalms which were sung whilst the people went up to receive Communion.

The Post Communion is the formal liturgical act of thanksgiving after Communion. It varies according to the feast, but is nearly always fashioned on the same type.

Once more the priest turns to the people with the usual greeting: "The Lord be with you," and announces that the Mass is finished. Secretly he once more dedicates the sacrifice to the Eternal Father, and then, turning to the people, he gives the blessing. All blessings come through the pleading of the divine Victim of the Sacrifice; and, therefore, it is most fitting that at the end of the Sacrifice a blessing should be pronounced.

Liturgical writers are divided in their opinion as to the origin of the custom of reading the last gospel. It may be derived from the private devotions of the celebrant after Mass; it may also be derived from the custom of saying prayers over the people. Whatever be its origin, its value to-day is to set before our minds the mystery of the Incarnation. We have offered the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ; we have partaken of the Sacrificial Banquet; so, finally, we are taught to seek the source of this great gift in the Incarnation. Nay, St. John leads us back further than

the Incarnation. He shows us the source of all this wondrous love in the unfathomable depths of the Eternal Godhead. The Word was with God from the beginning. In due time He was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. He continues to live with us, and we with Him, so that we may offer the Eucharistic Sacrament, and see therein His glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

DEO GRATIAS!

XXXV. VESPERS AND COMPLINE

BY THE REV. FRANCIS M. HARVEY

"In the daytime the Lord hath commanded His mercy; and a canticle to Him in the night."—Ps. xli, 9.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—We are, as a rule, blind to the beauty and significance of our Liturgy. Our duty to understand the symbolism of our Church services, that our Liturgy may be to us the means of grace it is intended to be.

Vespers.—As old as the Church. A memorial of the Evening Sacrifice of the Old Law, and of many sacred events in the life of our Lord. Points us forward to the evening of our own lives.

The Ceremonies in Detail.—The introductory Pater Noster and Ave Maria. The "Deus in Adjutorium." The five Psalms, the Capitulum and Hymn. The Magnificat. The significance of incensing the Altar and the Priest. The Prayer.

Compline.—Its special significance; it symbolizes the Death of our Lord and His sleep in the grave. It is also the Night-Prayer of the Church.

The Different Parts of Compline.—The Chapter; the Confiteor; the Invocation; the four Psalms; the Hymn; the Little Chapter; the Responsory; the "Nunc Dimittis"; the final Antiphon.

Conclusion.—The spirit in which we should attend our Sunday Services; with minds enlightened by an understanding of their Liturgy, and hearts warm with love and gratitude.

On entering some vast cathedral, or on reviewing the treasures of sacred art, one necessarily feels the influence of the spirit of devotion steal over him, and all that is low, all that is merely of the earth, slips from him at the touch of the genius of those arts that have crystallized for us the devout musings and heavenly aspirations of our forefathers in the Faith. And in the moment of spiritual exaltation that comes to us, we are apt to think that we would be far better and nobler, had we ever dwelt in this atmosphere of devotion; had we always been near these sublime expressions of piety. We have only to note those peoples in our midst who have come from such surroundings, whose childhood was passed in the sunlight of Christian art, whose feet have stood in the innermost sanctuary of the spirit of beauty, to realize that mere physical association has little or no influence on one's life. Consider how true this is even in matters of art. The miracles of color harmony in the old masters mean very little to the peasant; the mounting spires

and heaven-poised domes scarcely lift their eyes or their souls above the dust. For them antiquity unveils her loveliness, mystic with the meaning of the centuries, but in vain; the spirit of beauty comes before them with laden hands, but they do not reach their own to partake of her bounty. They have eyes and see not. And we feel, perhaps, that here is a field for missionary zeal, and we long to take the mote from the eye of our brother that he may behold the glory of his birthright. Let us first take the beam from our own. We Catholics are in the midst of vast treasures of beauty, surpassing even our treasures of architecture, painting, sculpture and music, and we know it not.

We are a royal people, not only as regards the splendors of our Faith, but in the regal stores of art, and above all, in the imperial magnificence of our Liturgy in which the divine truths that are ours have clothed themselves. As a noted speaker has said, the Catholic Church has been the mother and inspiration of art from the beginning. She raised the barbarian peoples who threatened to overwhelm her to a higher social and intellectual level, opened their eyes to the glory of the arts, taught them ennobling lessons of beauty, till "mind and soul according well" made perfect music. The poet dreamed, and she set his dream in stone; painter and sculptor found a home within her sanctuary; music, "the voice of the forgotten years," found in her an inspiration and a guide; literature, under her care, received its most perfect expression; and all this that she might instill into the hearts of her children the truths of faith, make plain and fair for them the ways of salvation. All the arts that have brightened the world with its message of beauty, she purified, ennobled and developed by making them the handmaids of her Liturgy. It was only that they might serve in adorning her majestic ceremonial, do homage to the splendors of her Liturgy, that she employed them at all. And yet, how many Catholics are practically ignorant of this Liturgy upon which the centuries have lavished their choicest treasures, at whose feet the world's greatest geniuses have knelt to receive her commands? We have some hazy ideas, perhaps, about the ceremonial or symbolic value of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. But the riches of our vast ceremonial system are as hidden from us as are the world's great art treasures from the pre-occupied toilers in their midst.

We should correct this. The eloquent messages of our Liturgy should not fall upon deaf ears; the superb pageantry should not pass

before unseeing eyes. It is our task to-day to touch upon some of the liturgical beauties of two services in our churches, common enough in their repetition, but insufficiently known and understood because of the neglect they are meeting with of late years; namely, Vespers and Compline. These services many complain, are not suited to modern needs. If by "modern needs" is meant the gratification of a desire for novelty, the catching and holding of our wandering attention by what is striking or bizarre, the complaint is well founded. But if our hearts are rightly attuned to the spirit of devotion, if we have a knowledge of the significance of the services that will enable us to be intelligent participators, if we truly desire to give Christian praise and receive from our public devotions the inspiration for genuine Christian lives, we will find, outside of the Holy Sacrifice itself, no surer, more effectual means than attendance at our Vesper service.

The service of Vespers comes to us freighted with the deathless thoughts of all the Christian centuries. It came into existence with the Church itself; it is the successor and the memorial of the evening sacrifice offered in the Temple at Jerusalem; the memorial, too, of the Last Supper and of the institution of the Blessed Eucharist. It bids us to thank God, for the mercies we have received at His Hand during the day; it is a sigh for the eternal day that will know no ending and for the perfect rest in heaven that follows life's toils and dangers. It recalls to our mind the tarrying of our Lord at eventide with the disciples at Emmaus, and inspires our hearts with their touching prayer: "Remain with us, O Lord, for the shadows of night are upon us." It summons before our minds that great Vesper service when the Lamb without spot was taken down from the Cross and laid in the tomb, His bitter day's work finished, the end for which He had come into the world accomplished. It beacons us forward to the Vesper time of this world of ours, when all who are His sheep shall be folded in His eternal pastures, and they who are as ravening wolves, shut out in the darkness of everlasting night. It bids us think of our own Vesper time, when the shadows of death will enfold us, and the incense of the Church's prayer shall bring the "sweet savor" of hope to our departing souls.

By way of instruction let us consider the service in detail. On entering the sanctuary the priest kneels and says the Our Father and the Hail Mary in silence, for the heart must be prepared for

all the solemn functions of holy religion by silent communion with God. Without a prepared heart we may not receive the fulness of His blessings. "Deus in Adjutorium meum intende." "O God, come to my assistance," chants the priest, and at the same time signing himself with the sign of the Cross; thus by his words bringing before our minds our entire dependence upon God, and His willingness to aid us, and by the sign of salvation proclaiming our faith in the Incarnation and the Redemption by which we are signed and sealed unto the Triune God. The Celebrant from his raised seat making the sign of the Cross, the hand in making it turning to four sides, should call to our mind the Holy One of God, raised upon Calvary, stretching forth His arms and calling unto His children, scattered to the four corners of the earth. And in the name of their scattered brethren the faithful cry out "Domine, ad adjuvandum me, festina," "Lord, make haste to help me!" and join in the doxology, the "Glory be to the Father," manifesting the prime intention of this and every other Christian act, to give glory, praise and thanksgiving to God. Then follow five psalms, songs of joy and triumph, for though Vesper service honors the death and burial of the Saviour, yet the Church in her liturgy proclaims the victory of life over death, of endless joy following passing sorrow.

The first psalm brings before us the eternal generation of the Son by the Father, the eternity, too, of His priesthood which, while God is God, shall be our medium of union with Him. His dominion over all nations, and His power to judge them; the final subjugation of all His enemies, and His exaltation are proclaimed. The following psalm sings the glory of the reign of Christ, the sway, through Him, of truth, mercy and justice, the faithfulness of His commandments, the wisdom of learning a reverent fear of our Lord.

The third psalm describes the blessedness of Him who has learned that fear of the Lord, who has ordered his life by the commands of the Son of God. His joy is dwelt upon and brought out by contrast with the lot of the sinner who has not acknowledged the sway of the "Son of David."

And now the Church, having placed before her children the Kingdom of her blessed Spouse, shown that the yoke is sweet and the burden light, calls upon them to praise the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. "Laudate, pueri, Dominum: laudate nomen Domini." We here join our voices in extolling the goodness and

the mercy of our King, who has regard to all that is meek and lowly, who lifts up the poor and helpless, and will not send the needy away; who, out of the midst of sterility and death bringeth joy and life.

The fifth psalm is a superb résumé of God's providential dealings with man. We are transported in spirit to the shores of the Red Sea, where the hosts of Egypt were overwhelmed. Sinai is again wrapt in flame, and from the midst of its blazing lightnings the Law is given. The Promised Land once more spreads its smiling plains to welcome God's chosen people. These are again but types, as Monsignor Gaume tells us, of the miracles wrought in our behalf: our deliverance from sin and death and hell by baptism, as the children of Israel were freed from the bondage of Pharoah; Faith, the pillar of cloud and of fire that leads us through the desert of life: the Law of Grace and of Mercy proclaimed from Calvary as the law of subjection was proclaimed from Sinai: the Bread that cometh down out of heaven, typified by the Manna that fed the Israelites in the wilderness, the everlasting joy and peace of Our Father's home awaiting us as the Promised Land awaited the sojourners of old.

So in these wonderful psalms we have a summary of all the blessings our God has bestowed upon us, individually and collectively, as members of His great human family, and as children of His Church. Marvelous, indeed, are these inspired songs of David, containing as they do some special appeal suited to the varying moods of every worshiper. They are the "harp of a thousand strings," whereby are recorded the thrilling thoughts and emotions that sweep over the soul of man, and they come to us sanctified by the repetition of countless servants of God.

As the last strains of the fifth psalm of Vespers die away, the priest rises and chants the little chapter, as it is called, a short lesson from the Old or the New Testament, that gives the special teaching of the festival celebrated. At the close the people reverently answer: "Thanks be to God." The priest stands to deliver this message to the people, for it is a summons to gird themselves to fight the enemies of their God and of their souls; to win for themselves the virtues set for their consideration in the festival, and the graces that are promised those who fight manfully under the standard of the Crucified. Then follows the hymn which is sung standing, for it is the song of an army marching to battle, of

children who have arisen to do the will of their Father, of subjects who reverence the commands of their King.

But how shall the Church fittingly thank God for all the wondrous blessings and favors she has just recounted: for her deliverance from the snares of the evil one, the continued protection of her Spouse, the promises of everlasting life? Not even David, the inspired minstrel of the Most High, can fittingly express her gratitude, and she calls to her aid the Mother of God Herself and in the inspired words of Her Magnificat finds a fitting psalm of joy, thanksgiving and praise.

At the first notes of the sublime Canticle priest and people arise to do honor by their posture to the words of the Mother of God, and to show their willingness to do what may be demanded of them as a practical expression of their gratitude for God's favors. Signing himself with the sign of the Cross, to show that even our most exalted joy must bear the seal of the Crucified—for without His Cross no joy would be ours—the priest ascends to the altar and puts incense into the censer. Three spoonfuls he places on the burning coals, symbolizing not only the faith, hope and charity of the people, but as a prayer that the works of our youth, our maturity and our old age, the thoughts, words and actions of all the circling hours of morning, noon and night may be as an offering of incense—a prayer to the Most High. He then incenses the altar, the table of Sacrifice, for our deeds must be offered in union with the Sacrifice of the Eternal Son, and through Him reach the Father. The priest is then incensed himself, not only as the representative of Christ, to whom our praise and honor are due, but to show that the reward of our works that have been done for God and offered to Him will come to us again, a sweet savor of Paradise.

After this the priest chants the prayer of the Mass, called the Collect, because it brings together the prayer and praise, the hopes and desires of all present, and offers them to God. "Benedicamus Domino" chant the clerks, "Let us praise the Lord," and all respond "Deo Gratias," "Thanks be to God," and so closes this beautiful service, eloquent of the mysteries of our holy faith, redolent of God's mercy and God's love, thrilling with the Christian joy and exultation, that, like its peace, surpasses all understanding.

But the watchful care of our holy Mother, the Church, is with us still. Another service, calling to mind the burial of our Lord

and His sleep in the grave, comes to spread its protecting wings about us as the shadows of night deepen. Compline is the night prayer of the Church, and, while it begins with a blessing, invoking a quiet night and a holy death, our watchful Mother reminds us in the lesson at the beginning of the service, that while *we* retire to rest, our adversary, the devil, takes no rest, but renewing his efforts with the darkness, goes about as a roaring lion, seeking his prey. It is ours to resist, strong in faith, and the first evidence of our resistence is to take unto ourselves the armor of prayer and the sword of humility. And so all join in that model of all prayer, the Our Father, and our hearts are humbled by the confession of our sins in the Confiteor. What better Christian preparation can there be for the night's rest, from which we may never awaken, than the lowly confession of our faults, the plea for God's mercy. Unhappy, indeed, is he who retires to his rest with no thought of the heavenly Father whom he has outraged, the Just Judge before whom he must give an accounting! It will be too late to say his Confiteor if the Angel of Death summon him into the presence of His offended God. Penitence is the fitting attitude in which to meet the shades of night, as penitence becomes us at the approach of the dark night of death, that our purified vision may behold the star of hope, His star guiding us to His own Dwelling and ours.

Penitence and hope, these are the twin themes in the service of Compline. At the end of the confession we have the invocation, "Convert us, O God, Who art our Saviour, and turn away Thine anger from us!" for sin is the only thing that can turn our Father and God from us, and if we be converted to Him, sin shall disappear as mist before the sun.

There follows the four psalms of Compline, indicative of the fourfold end of man's existence, to know, to love, to serve God, and to enjoy eternal bliss with Him in heaven. The first psalm is an act of gratitude to God for His protection through the day and throughout our lives, and a petition for strength to fight manfully against the enemies of our salvation. In the second psalm the Christian proclaims his hope of God's protection and care: "In Thee, O Lord, I have hoped; let me never be confounded!" And in the third we see how God protects the man who places his hope in Him. Whosoever relies on the arm of the Almighty shall live in peace under the protection of the God of heaven." The snares of the evil one shall have no power over him whose trust is in God;

the wicked and their machinations shall not prevail against him; his habitation will be the dwelling-place of peace and of joy.

The fourth psalm bids us be on our guard, and if we awake during the night to turn our minds and our hearts to our Father Who is watching over us. It is, too, a song of praise in which all unite: a call to bless God with heart and voice; an invocation of His eternal blessing upon us.

The hymn which follows is a résumé of the thoughts and sentiments contained in the preceding psalms, a plea for protection against the dangers of the night.

"Let dreams depart and phantoms fly,
The offspring of the night,
Keep up like shrines beneath Thine eye,
Pure, in the foe's despite."

The celebrant in the little chapter, which is now read, recalls to our divine Lord His promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst," and entreats Him by virtue of that promise not to forsake us now. "Thou art with us, O Lord, and Thy name is invoked upon us; do not forsake us!" "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," sings a voice; and the faithful repeat, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," "Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, God of truth," continues the voice, placing before the Most High the strongest reasons why He should protect us; we are His, bought at a great price, the price of the Cross, and He has promised to save us; and He is true, and His promises cannot fail. The faithful in response echo the opening words, "I commend my spirit," "Keep us, O Lord," sings the voice, "as the apple of Thine eye," "Protect us under the shadow of Thy wings," answer the people. The service is now drawing to an end, and the worshiper whose heart and mind have been absorbed in God is filled with longing to quit this land of exile, this vale of tears, and in the inspired words of Simeon voices that longing, "Nunc dimittis servum tuum Domine," "Now, O God, let Thy servant depart in peace." It is time now for this Christian family to separate, but before they go their spiritual father, the representative of the great High Priest of Our Redemption, raises his hand in blessing and entreats, "May the almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost bless and keep you. Amen."

We may depart now from the House of God with His benediction upon us, after we have greeted once more our blessed Mother with one of Her Antiphons; we may retire to rest, assured of the sleep of peace, no remorse troubling our hearts; the wings of God's holy angels folded about us.

Such is the Sabbath we should keep, such its peace and joy. Try to understand the services in which our holy Mother Church asks us to join—their beauty and their power; the psalms and hymns which inspire us with their noble music, with lofty thoughts and emotions. Remember that these services, however sacred in themselves, are to us just what we make them; what we carry from them depends on what we bring to them. It is not by saying or singing "Lord, Lord," that we shall taste the joys of heaven, but by doing the will of our Father. No number of prayers and psalms sung with an unloving heart and an unclean mind can bring us one step nearer the Lamb of God. It is the purpose of this instruction to open our minds to the majesty and the significance of our services; it remains with ourselves by humble striving and patient petition to so circumcise our hearts that the sacred words be not a blasphemy upon our lips. Let not our services be a stumbling-block unto us; our psalms, our antiphons, our hymns and our prayers may be to us a crystal river flowing with peace and joy, even the River of God that "floweth out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb"; or, they may be a turbid stream; an unprofitable burden, an empty form. But when the heart is clean in the sight of God, not only these services but life itself becomes a Sabbath whose peace nought can disturb; a service that no distraction can invade; a psalm whose power no coldness can chill; a hymn whose harmony no discord can destroy; a temple about which, indeed, the storms and tempests of the world may beat and the clouds of adversity gather, but whose celestial harmonies no storm can jar, no clouds obscure the light of the Eternal Presence dwelling therein.

XXXVI. THE BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

"There is no other nation so great that hath its gods so nigh them, as our God is nigh unto all our petitions."—Deut. iv, 7.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—In Benediction an instance of the sweet and strong ways of Divine Wisdom (Wisd. viii, 1). Development of devotion under guidance of the Holy Ghost, as an antidote to the growing coldness of men. Devotion to the Sacred Heart an instance of this. Experience shows that Benediction appeals to non-Catholics and conversions have resulted. Advantageous to study the history of Benediction as illustrating the "sweet and strong" ways of Providence. Incidentally, this study will refute a common objection.

I. History of the Rite—A twofold element in this Rite.—(a) Worship and adoration of Jesus Christ truly present. (b) The veneration and praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Idea of exposition, to add solemnity to a function, probably originated in the thirteenth century with the "Greater Elevation" in Mass, instituted as protest against disbelief in Transubstantiation.

From the beginning, Church has adored the Blessed Sacrament—proofs from St. Ambrose and St. Augustine.

With elevation probably arose the pious desire to look frequently upon the Sacred Species. Note how all this, and what followed, up to the institution of Benediction, illustrates God's way of working in His Church; and how all error is eliminated by the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit.

A further step in the use of transparent vessels for carrying the Sacred Host in processions. Then "Sacrament Houses": Restrictions upon continual exposition found necessary.

Practice of adding solemnity to functions by exposition.

To this last we may trace Benediction as we have it now: from the thirteenth century custom of singing hymns, etc., to B. V. M. in the evening. Exposition added to this for greater solemnity; thus we have the two elements of Benediction, viz.: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the praise and invocation of Mary.

Natural addition of hymns to the Blessed Sacrament—and, finally, the blessing given at the end. Reason why this blessing is given in silence.

II. Answer to Protestant Objections.—Why do Catholics sing hymns to Mary in the Presence of Jesus? Reply—(1) Catholics have always adored the Blessed Sacrament. (2) And have always venerated Mary. Hence—(1) The desire to look upon the Sacred Heart. (2) The habit of singing hymns in Mary's honor. (3) They joined these two things together in a way natural to Catholic devotion. Hence, it is from no false notion of any superiority of Mary over God that they did this.

Further justification of this practice: (a) Catholic principle that Jesus comes first. (b) Should we not honor Mary in heaven?—For we shall surely honor there those whom God honors. (c) If this is right in heaven, it must be right on earth, especially at a time—Benediction—when we have truly heaven upon earth.

III. Exhortation as to conduct at Benediction. Two thoughts: (a) The Majesty of Jesus, true God. (b) His Infinite Love and Compassion. Hence, our attitude: (a) Reverence. (b) Grateful Love.

In the touching and beautiful rite of Benediction, dear brethren of Jesus Christ, we have an instance of that wisdom of Divine Providence of which the sacred writer said: "She reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly" (Wis. viii, 1).

If this was true of the Divine Wisdom as shown forth in the old Dispensation, how much more is it true under the Dispensation inaugurated by that same Divine Wisdom become incarnate in the Person of the Word of God Himself; the Dispensation ruled by the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier and Guide of the Holy Catholic Church. In that Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, of the Father and the Son, we see, throughout the long years of her history how the body of sublime, saving, eternal truths taught by Jesus Christ and His Apostles have been expressed from time to time in various devotional practises and ordinances suggested by the Holy Ghost and incorporated by the Church into her devotional system. Under the sweet and strong Providence of God the unhappily growing coldness of men, foretold by the Master Himself as a characteristic of these latter days, has been met by the rise of beautiful devotions in the Church, by which God's love and mercy, the compassionate affection of Jesus for the souls of men, have been more and more vividly and touchingly impressed upon succeeding generations both within and without the Church. Take, for instance, the devotion to the Sacred Heart of our divine Lord, with all its warmth of love, its passionate appeal for a return of love to Him who has loved us with an everlasting love, its spirit of reparation to Him in view of the coldness and neglect that He suffers from so many multitudes of men. I said, just now, that this progressive appeal of the Divine compassion, through the agency of devotional developments, is directed to those without as well as to those within the Church; and I am justified by the fact that the late Holy Father Leo XIII., after a careful weighing of the question, did not hesitate to consecrate the whole world, Catholic, heretical and heathen alike, to the most sacred and adorable Heart of Jesus, in consequence, it is piously believed, of a revelation made by our blessed Lord to a holy nun who died in the odor of sanctity on the eve of that solemn act of consecration by the Supreme Pontiff.

Experience has shown that the beautiful rite of Benediction, loved by Catholics, indeed, with a peculiar love that only a Catholic can have, appeals also very strongly, indeed, to very many non-Catholics who may happen to be present at that service of the Church. Many

conversions are recorded as the result of the life-giving influence of the real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and of His blessing imported in the rite of Benediction.

It will be advantageous, as illustrating the strong and sweet ways of Divine Wisdom, who works in His Church largely through chosen human instruments, and bends to His holy purposes the natural instincts of His people enlightened by faith, if we study briefly the history of this deservedly favorite rite. Incidentally this study will refute a very common objection besought by Protestants against the usual form of the service of Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

We can distinguish a twofold element in this rite of Holy Church. There is the worship and adoration of Jesus Christ, God-made Man in the reality of His true, real, living Presence in the Sacred Host that is exposed to the sight of the faithful, and with which, at the conclusion of the service, they are solemnly blessed; there is also, we may say almost universally, the element of devotion to the holy Mother of God, represented by the singing of the Litany of Loreto or hymns in Her honor. The omission of these from the rite is the exception, not the rule. It is probable that the idea of exposing the Blessed Sacrament to the views of the faithful for devotional purposes originated with the elevation of the Sacred Host at Mass, instituted in the early part of the thirteenth century as a protest against a rising heresy which denied the Catholic Dogma of Transubstantiation. This must not be misunderstood. I would not for a moment imply that the Blessed Sacrament was then first adored. Far from it. The Church has adored the Blessed Sacrament from the time of its institution. St. Ambrose says: *'We adore in the mysteries the flesh of Christ, which the Apostles adored.' No one eats that flesh,'* says St. Augustine, *'without first adoring it.'* But the outward signs by which the Church has expressed this adoration have not always been the same" [Catholic Dictionary, London, 7th Ed., Art. "Elevation."]. Indeed, an elevation of the Blessed Sacrament was in use already before the introduction of that which now takes place immediately after the consecration. But the latter was more marked and took firm hold of the pious sentiment of the faithful, arousing in them the desire to look frequently upon those sacred outward forms that veil the substantial reality of our Incarnate Saviour there truly present. In this, and in all that followed, leading up to the rite of Benediction as we know it now, we

have simply an instance of God's way of working in His Church for the salvation of souls by the constant stimulation of devotion and a continual recalling to men's minds the saving truths of the Gospel by renewed efforts, as it were, of Divine love and compassion. That the Holy Spirit should use human instruments, and the devotional feelings of men elevated and guided by the light and virtue of Divine faith, in no way derogates from His power and position as the Director of the Church who leads her "into all truth," but is, on the contrary, an exemplification of the truth expressed by the Wise Man in the words I have already quoted when he says of divine Wisdom: "She reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly." In the divine institution of the infallible Church, ruled by God's own indwelling Spirit, we have the security that no false devotional tendency shall ever succeed in establishing in the Church any permanent custom that should be contrary to the spirit and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Following up the development of the rite that we are considering, we find that transparent vessels were in use for carrying the Blessed Sacrament in processions, and that later continual exposition of the Sacred Host was in use in some churches, permanent erections, known as "Sacrament Houses," being set up for this purpose. The practise, also, of adding solemnity to any ecclesiastical function by exposing the Blessed Sacrament became prevalent. The Church saw fit, in time, to place some restriction upon the practise of exposition, so that now, except on certain days when it is provided for in the rubrics, as, for instance, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, exposition in the monstrance may not take place without the permission of the Bishop of the Diocese, and is not permitted at all unless a certain number of the faithful are present in the church. The practise of adding solemnity to a function by exposing the Sacred Host to view is important in regard to the subject we are considering, for, according to a recent and high authority in liturgical history, it is to this that we may trace the actual form of the rite of Benediction as we have it now. [Fr. Thurston, S.J., in the "Catholic Encyclopedia," from which most of the historical statements in these sermons are derived.]

In that same thirteenth century in which the "Greater Elevation," as it is termed, was instituted as a protest against unbelief in the doctrine of Transubstantiation, the Elevation of the Host and Chalice immediately after the Consecration in holy Mass—it was

the custom for the faithful to meet together in church at evening time to sing praises to the Holy Mother of God. In due time the practise just referred to, of increasing the solemnity of public services by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament brought about that these hymns and praises to the Blessed Virgin were sung in the presence of Her Divine Son exposed in the Sacrament of His love. This gives us those two elements of which I told you the modern rite of Benediction is composed—adoration of the Blessed Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, and the praises of His most Holy and Ever-Virgin Mother. Nothing could be more natural than the addition of verses from two of the magnificent hymns from the Office of Corpus Christi, composed by the great saint and theologian, St. Thomas Aquinas, at the command of Pope Urban IV., hymns by which the saint proved himself to be also a great Christian poet. I refer, of course, to the *"Tantum Ergo,"* used everywhere at Benediction, and the *"O Salutaris,"* used in some countries. To these elements was added the final act of the rite—the blessing of the people with the Sacred Host before it is returned to the Tabernacle. This blessing is given without any words on the part of the officiating priest, showing us that "it is not the earthly, but the Eternal Priest who, in this rite, blesses and sanctifies His people" ["Catholic Dictionary," *loc. cit.*]. When a bishop gives Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, he makes the sign of the Cross over the people with the Sacred Host three times instead of only once, as is the case when an ordinary priest officiates.

I said, dear brethren, that this sketch of the history of Benediction would aid us to refute a common objection brought against this Catholic service by Protestants. They say to us: "Why, when you have our divine Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament, as you believe Him to be, do you spend so much time in singing hymns or litanies to the Blessed Virgin? Is not this a clear proof that your devotion to Her tends to overshadow and throw into the background your worship of Jesus Christ?" In the answer that I shall now give from the brief historical considerations that I have just concluded, I presuppose in our non-Catholic friends a certain amount of intelligence and some appreciation of the significance of historical facts; in these I have no doubt they are not wanting. We have seen how the praises of Mary and the Rite of Benediction came to be connected together. We may put it in this way: Catholics, as a matter of course, have always adored the Blessed Sacrament, knowing Jesus

Christ, God and Man, to be really present therein. Further, Catholics have always venerated in the highest degree—short of *divine* worship—the Most Holy Virgin, in virtue of Her entirely unique and unapproachable position amongst all creatures as truly the Mother of God. Hence it is that Catholics have loved and now love to look with their eyes upon the sacred forms under which Jesus hides Himself in the Blessed Sacrament, and to offer their prayers and praises to Him in His Sacramental Presence. Hence, secondly, they loved and do now love to meet together and sing the praises of His Mother whom He loves so well. By an equally natural process they came to join these two things together—the exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and the praises and invocation of Mary—because they felt (what could be more natural?) that the Presence of Jesus vividly represented to them, by the sight of the Sacred Host, through which the eye of faith fails not to pierce to the Great Reality there contained, unspeakably entrances the solemnity of any religious service. Whatever our non-Catholic friends may feel, then, as to the propriety of honoring the Holy Mother of God, of paying some respects to her whom Jesus Christ obeyed, to whom He "was subject" during His life on earth—at least they will admit the evidence of history that it was with no idea of obscuring the worship of Jesus, that it is with no false notion of any superiority of Mary over Her God, that the Litany of Our Lady or the rosary was introduced into and is now generally recited at the service of Benediction.

I am tempted, dear brethren, to enlarge a little on this, to show how eminently reasonable, how entirely right it is that we should sing the praises of the Mother in the presence of Her Son. Every Catholic child knows that we do not put her above Him, that all she has and is she owes as much as we do to the shedding of His Precious Blood—nay, she owes Him more than we; for that blood-shedding obtained for Her higher, greater gifts than any other creature ever has received or will. This primary Catholic principle being secured, as it *is* secured by every word of the Church's teaching about our Blessed Lady, I would ask, is it not eminently reasonable and altogether right to sing the Mother's praises and to invoke Her in the sacramental presence of Her Son? I would say to my Protestant friends: You hope for heaven, do you not? When you are there you will worship Jesus; He will be your light, your life, your bliss. You will see Him, speak to Him, hear the lovely accents

of the sweetest voice that ever spake to men. Yes; all this is true. And what of those whom He loves, whom you have loved, who will be there with you? Will you have nothing to say to them? Will your love for them have grown cold; will it cease in that very land of love? Will your love for them not rather increase a thousandfold in that heavenly country where Love is all in all, and all love all in God with love unspeakable?

Even here on earth not to love the friends of Jesus is to do *Him* wrong. In heaven it would be impossible. And whom does Jesus love of all the children of men as He loves the Mother that bore Him? Shall *we*, then, not love her there? Shall we there ignore her and pass her by whom Jesus loves so much? Shall we not honor her there whom the King delighteth to honor? When, at the time of our happy entrance into the glorious realm of bliss, we have thrown ourselves at the sacred feet of Jesus, our Redeemer, shall we not do the like at the feet of His own dearest Mother? Shall we be able to do anything else? My dear Protestant friends, who are so tender of the honor of Jesus, *we* are not behind you in that; but say, will Jesus be pleased if you ignore His Mother when you get to heaven? Will He be dishonored if *there* you speak to her in His presence and in His hearing words of love and of congratulation and of thanks for the intercession which *then* at least and at last you will know she has made on your behalf? I doubt not what your answers will be—*must* be, to these interrogations. You will agree with me, you *must* agree with me, about what we shall do in heaven. And if in heaven these things are right, why not on earth? And if at *any* time they are right on earth, surely they are right at a time when we have upon earth one of the nearest likenesses to heaven possible here below. Such a time, for Catholics, is the time of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, when Jesus is among His people in the reality of His Godhead and Manhood. And, though you may not hold with me, you can no longer blame us for what we do, nor say that we are unreasonable, nor that we derogate from the honor of Jesus by honoring His Mother in His presence. We are now doing only what we hope to do for all eternity. Here we have Him who is the King of heaven. We worship and adore Him as we shall do hereafter; we love His loved ones, as hereafter we shall love them; we honor those whom He honors, as we shall in heaven itself; therefore we reverence, and love, and honor His own dear Mother, as in heaven it will be our joy and His will that we shall do.

But, dear brethren, it is time that we returned to the more immediate subject of this discourse; and before I conclude I would say a few words as to our personal conduct and duties when we are privileged to be present at this beautiful rite of Benediction. I think that our minds should be engaged chiefly upon two thoughts during this service: the thought of our divine Lord's infinite Majesty as King and God of heaven and earth, and the thought of His infinite love and compassion for us sinful men. These two thoughts do not exclude one another, but, on the contrary, the one helps the other. Nor, as you shall see, does the thought of Mary in the least interfere with those other two thoughts; but it is naturally included in the second of them.

Let us take first the thought of the Majesty of Jesus. What majesty is there equal to His? For though He hid that Majesty under the veil of His Sacred Humanity, and though in the Blessed Sacrament, by a further self-abasement, He veils also His glorious Human Nature under the outward form and qualities of the consecrated Host, yet in truth He is still the very God who made us, that same God who made and rules this vast universe, who thundered on Sinai, who has struck down His enemies in righteous anger, Jehova, the mighty Lord of Hosts, before whom pure angelic spirits tremble and veil their faces from the piercing glance of His all-holy eyes, our awful sovereign Judge. What great, what exceeding great reverence should be ours when we kneel before His sacred presence in this most holy Sacrament!

But He is also of infinite love and compassion. Love for whom? Compassion for whom? For all, dear brethren. Love for saints and love for sinners; yes, and for sinners especially a divine pity, a yearning, loving desire to bring them to Himself. For sinners He is present in this Sacrament of Love. What gratitude, what consolation, what hope; above all, what grateful *love* should fill our souls as we kneel before the God of Love and Pity in that compendium of all His mercies.

And when we think of His Love, and His Pity, and of all that He has done for us, is it possible to keep out of our minds for long the thought of Her who was the instrument, the means by which He came from heaven to save us; who was the Bridge by which the Infinite passed to take a finite nature; whom He has given to us to be a minister of His mercies by that office of Advocate and Intercessor for all mankind with which He has endowed her? No, we

cannot think of the mercies of Jesus and leave out that great Work of Mercy that she is.

So, dear brethren, in this sacred rite of Benediction we truly have heaven upon earth; a foretaste of the bliss that is to be. Truly, "there is no other nation that hath its gods so nigh as the Lord is nigh" unto us. And as our divine Lord has anticipated for us, in some measure, the very joys of heaven itself in this beautiful service of His Bride, the Catholic Church, shall we not try to enter into His most merciful purposes, and thus make every Benediction a step of the ladder that leads above? May these poor words of mine help you to do this. For your part resolve that reverence, gratitude and love shall represent the attitude of your hearts and minds whenever you kneel before our blessed Lord in this Most Holy Sacrament—reverence for the majesty He so mercifully veils lest we should fear to come near the steps of His throne; gratitude for the benefits of His great Redemption that in this Sacrament are so wonderfully summed up—love; grateful love for Him who is the supremely worthy object of all love, and deserving of the love of every creature both for what He is and for what He has done. And may Mary, His holy Mother, whom we cannot separate from the thought of Him—may she intercede for us that one day we may praise Him and praise her face to face in our true home, the Kingdom of His father and ours.

XXXVII. BLESSINGS OF THE HOLY OILS

BY THE REV. CHARLES BRUEHL, D.D.

"Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."—Ps. xliv, 8.

SYNOPSIS.—The nature and utility of oil. Its use in the Old Testament: (1) On persons—Aaron, Samuel, David, etc. Its signification—abundance of grace, special vocation, etc. (2) On things—the stone of Jacob, the tabernacle, etc. Oils used extensively in the New Testament. Their solemn blessing by the Bishop on Holy Thursday. Oils applied to all the children of the Church and to all her temples. The physical effects of oil—the spiritual effects.

My dear friends, oil is among the finest products of the earth. It requires a highly cultivated soil and a very propitious climate. Only in its most favorable conditions can nature distil this precious liquid. The oil-tree, therefore, is the sign of opulence in biblical language. Oil is the outcome of a slow growth and of a laborious process in the hidden workshops of nature. In a most refined manner and in a very condensed form it contains the chief nutritious and medicinal ingredients which the earth yields. We readily understand that our Lord should have chosen this noble product of nature to figure conspicuously in the economy of salvation and that He should have attached to it His choicest graces. In the Old Testament oil is used for the most solemn ceremonies. The Church of the New Testament applies oil in all consecrations of a more elevated character and in the sacred rites of most of the Sacraments. Our Lord himself is called the Anointed.

As oil occupies such a prominent place in the rites and ceremonies of the Church, it will be very instructive and useful for us to meditate on its symbolism and its various applications. This will also reveal to us the wonderful and profound harmonies that exist between the kingdom of nature and the kingdom of grace. Again, it will give us an opportunity to admire the inspired insight of the Church into the most intricate mysteries of nature, mirrored in our beautiful ceremonies. We will meditate on the use of oil in the Old Testament, on the consecration of the oils and on their application in the Church.

1. Priests and kings in the Old Testament were anointed. Moses receives from Jehova the solemn injunction: "Thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and shalt sanctify them, that they may do the office of priesthood unto me. And thou shalt say to the children of Israel: This oil of unction shall be holy unto me throughout your generations" (Exod. xxx, 30).

And in the first Book of Kings we read: "And the Lord said to Samuel: 'How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, whom I have rejected from reigning over Israel? Fill thy horn with oil, and come, that I may send thee to Isai, the Bethlemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.' . . . Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward" (I. Kings xvi, 1-3). In the Psalms God himself is introduced as speaking: "I have found David my servant: with my holy oil I have anointed him. For my hand shall help him: and my arm shall strengthen him. And my truth and my mercy shall be with him" (Ps. lxxxviii, 21-23). This anointing is the sign of a special calling and a higher vocation. It marks a man for the service of God and singles him out from the rest of the people. The anointed enjoys a more direct protection on the part of almighty God and stands before the people as his representative, vested with superior authority and powers. With this anointment comes also the special grace of God and all that is necessary for the proper equipment of his servant. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me" (Is. lxi, 1). The fulness of spiritual unction, the plentitude of the holy gifts of the Spirit descend upon the anointed, fitting him for the arduous mission for which God has selected him. The anointed speaks in the name of Him who sent him and who has placed His seal upon the mortal brow. It is, therefore, a sacrilege to raise one's hand against the anointed of the Lord. From all this we see that the anointment in the Old Testament signifies a particular dignity, an extraordinary vocation, an abundance of grace, a spiritual strengthening and the consecration to a lofty purpose.

Not only persons are anointed in the Old Testament, but also certain things which are designed for the service of God and for use in the sanctuary. Jacob thus sanctifies the stone which he erects in memory of his wonderful vision. "And Jacob, arising in the morning, took the stone which he had laid under his head, and set it up for a title, pouring oil upon the top of it" (Gen. xxviii, 18).

In the same manner Moses consecrated the holy tent of the Lord and all the things to serve at religious functions: "He took also the oil of unction, with which he anointed the tabernacle, with all the furniture thereof. And when he had sanctified and sprinkled the altar seven times, he anointed it, and all the vessels thereof and the laver with the foot thereof, he sanctified with the oil" (Lev. viii, 10). Thus these instruments were drawn from profane uses and stamped for the exclusive service of the sanctuary; they now belonged to a higher order of things and were, as far as inanimate objects can become channels of spiritual influences, endowed with inherent and permanent spiritual forces and qualities.

The Old Testament is but the shadow of the New Testament and the Church. And likewise has the old Liturgy received a new and profounder meaning where it has been adopted and applied by the Church. This holds good especially inasmuch as the use of oil and of different anointings is concerned. The sacred oils of the New Testament are blessed in a very solemn manner, and by the strength of this blessing they become very efficacious means of grace. We will follow the ceremonies of this blessing step by step, and also dwell upon the beautiful words accompanying the various rites.

2. The sacred oils, intended for liturgical purposes, are blessed by the hands of the bishop. The cathedral is the solemn scene of these holy rites. Usually a great gathering of diocesan priests witnesses this august function which takes place on Holy Thursday. The faithful throng the cathedral at this occasion and watch with rapt attention and untiring devotion the progress of the ceremonies.

The bishop appears in the full splendor of his pontifical robes; the mitre crowns his forehead. He is surrounded by twelve priests, seven deacons, and seven subdeacons, so that all the orders of the priestly hierarchy are represented. As the holy sacrifice of the Mass is the perpetual fountain of all graces and blessings, the blessing of the holy oils is connected with the celebration of the Mass. After the elevation the celebrant proceeds to a seat prepared for him. There the vases containing the oil are placed before him on a table covered with white linen. First the oil for the sick is blessed.

In the most powerful name of the Blessed Trinity he exorcises the oil, banishing the influences of wicked spirits that infest the world. After the exorcism he entreats God to send his Spirit, the

Comforter, over the oil and to give it the power to make sound mind and body. Making the sign of the Cross, he continues to pray, that everyone who will be anointed by this holy oil may in virtue of this blessing be restored to mental and corporal health, that he may be freed from pain and suffering and be delivered from all forms of disease. These great favors are asked in the name of our Lord. It was in this saving name that St. Peter restored to the lame man the use of his limbs, as he candidly declares before the tribunal of the high priest: "be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by him this man standeth here before you whole" (Acts iv, 10). And it happens nowadays that this oil of the sick blessed in the all-powerful name of Jesus brings relieve and comfort, and, sometimes, complete health to the infirm.

Now the bishop returns to the altar and completes the Mass as far as holy Communion. He then again occupies his seat and the deacon brings the balsam, a mixture of aromatic substances. The bishop blesses it and prays that it may carry spiritual joy to all, and that it may become a fit material for the sacramental functions. This balsam is afterwards mixed with holy oil, and this mixture constitutes the chrism. It signifies the good odor of Christ which our good works should spread in this world and which should make known the beauty of our faith.

The chrism is consecrated under the solemn strains of the Preface. The bishop addresses God, as the creator of all things, and in particular as the maker of those plants that ooze forth various oily substances. He thanks the Creator for the generous olive and praises its useful qualities. It imparts brightness to our face and kindles a glow on the cheek. It is the emblem of peace, as was the olive branch which the dove brought back to Noe after the floods of the Deluge had retreated. This oil will make us rejoice and light up our eyes as it communicates to the baptismal waters the power to destroy sin and crime. It will consecrate our body as a temple of the Holy Ghost and sanctify our members according to the words of St. Paul: "Know you not that you are the temples of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I. Cor. iii, 16). It will make our lives redolent with the sweet odor of innocence and be a source of eternal salvation and of glory everlasting. These are the effects which the bishop asks God to grant to the holy chrism.

After the chrism has been thus blessed the bishop and the assisting priests honor the holy oil, bowing to it, and salute it with the words: "Hail, holy chrism." Each one repeats this salutation three times, and each time in a higher intonation.

The oil of the catechumens is then blessed. The ceremonies resemble those already described. The prayer recited over the oil explains the purposes for which it is to be used and the effects which it will bring about. This prayer, so beautiful and forceful in the original Latin, we will try to render in our own vernacular. It is thus that the treasure of the Liturgy and its wealth of meaning are unlocked to the faithful that are unable to understand the language of the Church. The prayer reads in a somewhat free translation: "O God, generously dost thou reward all efforts we make to grow and advance in spiritual life; Thy holy Spirit encourages the slight beginnings of timid souls; pour forth Thy abundant blessing upon this oil. Let it cleanse and purify mind and body of all who come to the sacred fountain of regeneration. May the contact of this holy oil remove every stain that the wickedness of hostile spirits has caused. May it leave no room for the malice of evil spirits, no power to harmful creatures, no freedom to the lurking powers of darkness. But to those who accept thy holy faith and who are purified by the Holy Spirit, let it be a preparation for eternal salvation, to which we receive a title in the Sacrament of our heavenly birth."

Upon this all those present also salute the oil of the catechumens, singing three times: "Hail, holy oil." The vessels are then carried to the sacristy under the chanting of a hymn, which extols the dignity of the consecrated oils. According to need, the sacred oils are distributed to the different parishes of the diocese.

Besides these liturgical oils, used in the administration of the Holy Sacraments and blessed by the bishop only, there exists a holy oil destined for private use, which can be blessed by a simple priest. No particular solemnities surround this act. An exorcism is pronounced over this oil; it is sprinkled with holy water and a prayer is said. In the prayer the priest implores God to deliver from disease and infirmity whosoever uses this oil, and to strengthen them against insidious assaults of spiritual enemies and to heal them from the poisonous infection of the old serpent. The use of this holy oil will be very helpful to all sick persons.

The Church uses the holy oils very generously and applies them

to the faithful very extensively. They are not reserved for the anointing of kings and priests, or for extraordinary occasions. The humblest and least member of the Church is entitled to them. The reason for this liberal practise and its ultimate explanation is to be sought for in the words of St. Peter: "Be you also as living stones built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. . . . But you are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people" (I. Peter ii, 5). Because every Christian partakes of the royal and priestly character of Christ, therefore is he anointed. By the anointing the Christian is separated from the world and set aside for a higher mission. He is vested with a new and great dignity, and the holy ointment on his brow proclaims his exalted calling. We see in the light of the doctrine of St. Peter why the practise of anointing is so common in the Church of God, whereas it was but exceptional in the Old Testament. God's graces have become more widely diffused; the loftiest stations in the kingdom of God are within reach of everybody and accessible even to the lowest and last. There is a noble equality in the economy of the New Testament, not, however, an equality that degrades all, but one that elevates and ennobles all.

The holy oils are used in the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Extreme Unction, and the Priesthood. The oil for the sick constitutes the matter for the Holy Sacrament of Extreme Unction. It carries with it the power to heal and to comfort in bodily anguish, but it also conveys many spiritual graces, such as the remission of sin and the imparting of strength to the soul. The same oil is, however, also employed for the blessing of a bell. The oil of the catechumens serves many different purposes. We need it for the blessing of the baptismal font and for Baptism itself. It is this holy oil by which the Christian is consecrated to the service of God. We should frequently recall to our memory this holy unction and the solemn duties and grave responsibility that are connected with it. It was then that we were consecrated temples of the Holy Ghost in virtue of this holy oil. Has our conduct been in keeping with our noble calling? Have we never brought disgrace to the seal by which God has marked us for Himself? Let us renew in us the graces of this first anointing and strive to be worthy of the holy character imprinted on our soul. The oil of the catechumens figures in the ordination of the priest.

And this circumstance and coincidence again impresses on our mind the idea that all Christians have something of a priestly character about them. At the coronation of kings and for the consecration of churches and altars the oil of the catechumens is likewise used. Accordingly, it serves to dedicate the living temple of God, which is our body, and the material temple of stones.

The holy chrism is necessary for the blessing of the baptismal water and for the administration of baptism itself. It also enters into the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is also required for the consecration of a bishop, for the consecration of a church, an altar, a chalice and the patena, and for the blessing of a bell.

The sacred oils are held in high esteem by the faithful. They are carefully preserved in the church and should not be handled by anyone who has not received holy orders. Every year, on Holy Thursday, they must be renewed and the oils of the preceding year may not be used, but are to be destroyed by fire. Whenever we are to be anointed we should see that the part of the body to which the holy oil will be applied is clean. This should be especially remembered when the Sacrament of Extreme Unction is administered. We owe this to the dignity of the sacred oils.

The external anointing with holy oil typifies and expresses the internal unction of the Spirit. "But you have the unction of the Holy One," declares St. John. And the Roman Catechism explains the symbolism of the oil in the following words: "As oil is rich in fat, and in virtue of its natural properties adheres and spreads, it is an apt illustration of the fulness of grace, which through the Holy Ghost flows from Christ, the Head, and is diffused over all the members."

Oil gives light and warmth; it nourishes, strengthens, heals and brings joy. It is the sign of fertility and abundance. It does not remain on the surface of an object, but penetrates into its interior. Balsam protects against corruption and exhales a pleasing odor. In all this the oil is a true picture of the grace of God. The grace of God is granted to all in an overflowing measure. God dispenses his graces with royal liberality. His grace is insinuating. It enters into the soul and permeates our whole being, renewing and transforming us completely. With grace comes the enlightenment of our mind, firmness of the will, spiritual courage, consolation and peace. It bestows incorruptibility on our soul and renders us impervious to the infection of sin. A precious gift also follows in the wake of

grace, that divine peace of the heart which the world cannot give, nay, which the world does not even know.

May this unction of the Spirit come over our souls by the power of the holy oils. May the oil of our baptismal and of our holy confirmation again become redolent on our brow, and may also the interior unction of grace be renewed in us. And when our last illness approaches, may the holy oil of the infirm prepare us for our great and decisive struggle. Signed by the holy oil, we belong to God here on earth; we will remain loyal and faithful to Him. And thus this oil will become for us an oil of gladness and of eternal joy and never-ending bliss. How happy and grateful will we be when the words of the psalm quoted in the beginning of our meditation may be applied to us: "Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity: therefore, God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Amen.

XXXVIII. BLESSINGS OF THE WATER

BY THE REV. CHARLES BRUEHL, D.D.

"Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, O Lord, and I shall be cleansed: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow."

SYNOPSIS.—The dangers that surround us. The protective forces given by God; the Sacramentals. Holy water, its blessing and use. Water stands for life, purity, fruitfulness. These are the effects of Holy Water. The prayers said at the blessing. The advantage of Holy Water in moments of temptation—its efficacy in relation to venial sin. Exhortation to frequent use of Holy Water.

My dear friends, the Church surrounds us with sanctifying influences. Not only for the great moments and crises of our lives has she her solemn invocations and consecrating rites, which we call Sacraments, but throughout the hours of the day and in the commonplace occupations of everyday drudgery does she follow us with her blessings embodied in the sacramentals. Everything which we may use in our daily life she touches with a consecrating and purifying hand.

The things of this earth carry with them dangers for our soul, temptations, malign influences; they breathe an atmosphere of moral contagion and exhale the pestilential vapors of seduction. Ever since the curse of God fell upon the earth, all things may somehow bring about the downfall of our immortal soul. Against these baleful influences of corruption, continually at work, the Church protects us by her various and multiplied benedictions. She renders us immune against this fatal and all-pervading perversion of the fallen creation by her solemn exorcism and hallows all things by consecrating them to the service of God and making them instruments of sanctification. So that it comes to be true, what St. Paul says: "And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as according to His purpose are called to be saints" (Rom. viii, 28). The powers of darkness retreat as the Church encircles us with her sacred symbols. It is thus that the lonesome traveler in the wilderness at nightfall builds around himself a ring of fire to ward off the attacks of wild beasts and poisonous reptiles. In like manner does the Church place her children within

an enchanted circle of holy and consecrated things, thereby holding the subtle enemies of our spiritual and temporal welfare at bay.

No evil spell of the powers of the abyss can reach us if we make proper use of these wonderful helps the Church grants us. They are, in fact, nothing less than the permanent prayers of the Church, crystallized benedictions, symbols to which the breath of a prayer clings and that hold fast the echo of her powerful intercession. And this voice of pleading becomes alive and loud at the moment when we make use of these holy symbols and when we need special help. But we must use them with a strong faith, otherwise their efficacy is stayed. The word of our Lord: "Thy faith hath made the whole," applies especially to the use of the sacramentals.

We will speak of one of the most favorite sacramentals, to wit: holy water; we will mainly speak of the beautiful ceremonies by which it is blessed. The Liturgy of the blessing of the water abounds in striking thoughts and apt allusions to the symbolic meaning of this important element. There is a wonderful poetry in the prayers which the Church pronounces over the consecrated fountain.

1. Water plays a very important rôle in the Old and New Testaments. It is mentioned on the first page of the Bible: "The Spirit of God moved over the waters" (Gen. i, 2). And from thence proceeded the germs of all life. In fact, life is impossible without water. We may call it the life-producing and life-preserving element. St. John, well aware of the unique importance of the liquid element, proclaims: "And there are three that give testimony on earth: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three are one" (I. John v, 8). Our Lord speaks of living waters: "The water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting" (John iv, 14).

Moreover, water is the ordinary means of purification. Without an abundance of water there can be no cleanliness. In places where there is but a scanty supply of water, filth prevails and dirt holds an undisputed sway. How often in the course of the day do we avail ourselves of the cleansing properties of this indispensable element! Ablutions in the Old Testament were numerous and frequent. Christ himself does not disdain to render this humble service to his apostles: "After that, He putteth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of the disciples" (John xiii, 5).

Lastly, water is the necessary condition of fertility. Desert-like

is the realm where no spring sparkles and no stream winds its way. But a region traversed by the silvery threads of meandering rivulets or irrigated by the bounteous floods of a mighty torrent, blossoms forth in exuberant growth and prolific fruitfulness. The Scripture, therefore, likens the just man to a plant whose roots are laved by the rippling waves of a copious spring: "He shall be like a tree that is planted by the riverside, which brings forth its fruit in due season, and its foliage shall not fail" (Ps. i, 3).

Thus, water stands for life, for purity, for fruitfulness. It is so in the natural order. It has a similar function and an equal importance in the kingdom of grace. The supernatural life of our soul springs from a fountain endowed with higher virtues and from the Holy Spirit of God. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii, 5). And all our purity is derived from the same sacred source, which the Apostle calls "the laver of regeneration" (Tit. iii, 5). When our Lord speaks of the good works which we must bring forth by the help of His grace, He again draws His images from the natural qualities of water: "He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii, 38). Which means that the faithful shall be fruitful in good works, which do not perish, but will receive everlasting reward.

Upon these scriptural thoughts the whole Liturgy of the blessing of the water is based. They are enlarged and embellished in the liturgical prayers and find a most charming and poetical expression. We will penetrate into the details of this profound and sublime symbolism inspired by the Holy Ghost, carefully and ingeniously designed by the Church and religiously transmitted from age to age. This meditation will nourish our faith and enlighten our piety.

2. Holy water is a vehicle of graces and blessings. To become such it must, according to the language of the Ritual, be blessed, sanctified and consecrated. As there are different purposes for which holy water is used, so there are different benedictions. There is a particular formula for the blessing of the baptismal water on Holy Saturday and the Saturday before Pentecost; another one for the blessing of the holy water on Sundays, which serves at the aspersion of the faithful before High Mass and at all ordinary occasions. A formula of its own is employed for the blessing of the water used at the consecration of a church, of an altar, of a cemetery, and of the bells.

The ordinary holy water is generally blessed on Sundays. It should be frequently renewed for sanitary reasons and for the sake of cleanliness. The priest performs this ceremony. It is done in the following manner: First, salt is exorcised and blessed, which afterwards is mixed with the water. By exorcism the curse is canceled and the power of satan is broken. Salt typifies health of soul and body and incorruptibility. A like exorcism is pronounced over the water itself, banishing the influence of wicked spirits. The salt and water being mixed, the sign of the Cross is repeatedly made over them, to show that all graces and blessings flow from the merits of Christ crucified. Then a final prayer is spoken, which sums up the effects of the holy water. It is so beautiful and so instructive that it deserves to be translated. It will give a better idea of the meaning and the efficacy of holy water than a long discussion. Its wording is as follows, somewhat quaint, but full of spiritual unction and holy pathos: "O God, author of invincible might, king of unconquerable dominion, and ever a conqueror who doest wonders, who puttest down the strength of all that rise up against thee; who overcomest the fury of the adversary; who by thy power doest cast down his wickedness; we, O Lord, with fear and trembling, humbly entreat and implore thee to mercifully look upon this creature of salt and water, to graciously illumine and sanctify it with the dew of thy favor; that wheresoever it shall be sprinkled by the invocation of Thy holy name, all troubling of unclean spirits may be cast out, and the dread of the poisonous serpent be chased far away; and let the presence of the Holy Ghost vouchsafe to be with us, who ask Thy mercy, in every place. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with Thee in unity with this same Holy Spirit forever. Amen."

This venerable old prayer, despising all attempts at vain rhetoric, yet so lofty in its tone and so impressive in its simplicity, stirs the very depths of our soul. We understand how the grace of God must descend, when the holy Church pleads in such pathetic accents and with such an unlimited confidence.

We read in the Gospel of St. John the story of the healing pond at Jerusalem, called Probatica, which in Hebrew is named Bethsaida. Of this he tells us: "And an angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond; and the water was moved" (John v, 4). Of the holy water font we can say more. Not an angel descended, but the power of the Spirit himself stirs this sacred flood and enriches

it with healing powers. And the shadow of the Spirit hovers and remains over these waters, breathing upon them and continually infusing into them the virtue to cleanse and to heal. The blessing of the Spirit goes with it wherever a drop of it is sprinkled.

The ordinary holy water is always at the disposal of the faithful. It is preserved in some appropriate vase, easily accessible to all. You are invited, my dear friends, to renew your supply of holy water quite frequently and to make lavish use thereof. The sources of grace never run dry in the Church of God. Neither is the holy water font, its symbolical and visible expression, ever empty.

The ceremonies attending the blessing of the baptismal water are of a very impressive and solemn nature. The prayers accompanying these holy ceremonies and explaining their meaning soar to the loftiest heights of the most sublime poetry. They are chiefly drawn from the Prophets and the Psalms. Let us follow these ceremonies in the order in which they are performed.

They begin with the singing of a psalm: "As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so doth my soul long for thee, O God." Follows a prayer rehearsing the theme of the psalm and pleading with God to infuse the power of regeneration into the water intended for baptism. Then the priest raises his voice, and in the grave and majestic key of the Preface implores God to sanctify the baptismal fountain by that same Spirit that moved over the waters in the beginning of the world. He then continues to entreat God that this sacred water may become for many a source of a new life, that it may dispel the insidious powers of the infernal regions, that it may cleanse many from the stains of sin. He asks this in the name of our Lord Christ, from whose sacred Wound blood and water gushed forth. During these prayers the priest repeatedly touches the water and makes the sign of the Cross over it. He also divides the water with his hand and sprinkles it towards the four parts of the world. This signifies that the whole world is to partake of the abundant graces of God and that baptism is for all, according to the words of Christ: "Going, therefore teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxvii, 19). Then the priest dips the Paschal candle into the water three times, saying: "May the virtue of the Holy Spirit descend into this replenished fountain." The Paschal candle is an image of Christ, who is called the light of the world. The immersion of the candle is expressive of the union of the soul

with Christ, from whom comes grace and life. Then the priest breathes thrice upon the water in the form of a cross. After this he continues in the tone of the Preface to sing the following beautiful strain: "May all the stains of sin be effaced by the power of this holy water; may nature, created in the image of God, be restored to its original splendor and glory, and freed from all impurity of the past, in order that every one who receives this holy Sacrament of regeneration may be reborn to a state of perfect innocence." Whereupon the holy oils and the chrism are poured into the water, mingled with it and spread all over the font. The ceremonies are terminated by solemn invocations of the Blessed Trinity.

We can hardly imagine anything more sublime and more beautiful than the rites which we have described. It should be your earnest wish to witness these holy ceremonies, when again they will be carried out in our church. They reveal to us something of the beauty of our holy religion and make us love the glorious Liturgy of the Church.

3. Holy water has been in use from the times of the Apostles. Pope Alexander I., living about the year 130, is a witness for the ancient tradition. He says: "We bless salt and water for the people, that all who may be sprinkled therewith may be cleansed and sanctified." It has been foreshadowed in the Old Testament. We read in the ritual of the ablutions: "He that toucheth the corpse of a man, and is therefore unclean seven days, shall be sprinkled with this water on the third day and on the seventh, and so shall be cleansed" (Num. xix, 12). The healing powers of the waters of the Jordan again are an image of the efficacy of holy water. To be cured from the terrible and loathsome disease of leprosy, Naaman, the Syrian, bathes himself seven times in the Jordan in obedience to the injunction of the prophet Eliseus (IV., Kings v, 14).

Holy water indirectly cleanses the soul from the foul stains of our minor shortcomings. As dust settles upon our body as we walk on the public highways or as we perform our daily work, so is our soul stained in its hourly contact with the world. By the pious use of holy water the purity of our soul is restored. The word of our dear Lord which He addressed to St. Peter, applies to the lesser stains: "He that is washed, needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly" (John xiii, 10). St. Thomas, the prince of theologians, declares: "By the sprinkling of holy water the debt of venial sin is wiped out; but not always, however, are all temporal

punishments relinquished; this takes place in proportion to the disposition of the person using it, depending upon the less or greater degree of ardor in the love for God on the part of the person using it: Blessing ourselves, therefore, we should elicit an act of Contrition."

As our body is refreshed by a bath, so is the soul invigorated by the use of holy water. We grow weary in our continual struggles against sin and temptation; we sometimes become despondent at the sight of so many enemies seeking to ensnare us; we begin to falter on the narrow path of virtue; in such moments of spiritual discouragement and weakness a little prayer and a drop of holy water will do much to cheer us and to renew our strength as that of the eagle. It will have the same effect upon our soul as the dew has upon a languishing plant.

The frequent use of holy water also shields us against the delusions and the treacherous wiles of the evil spirits and against all the cunning artifices and the crafty machinations of hell. For such is the prayer of the Church, pronounced at the blessing of the holy water, "That every delusion and wickedness of the devil and all unclean spirits fly and depart."

With all this, there comes over us a spirit of devotion, a certain unction of the will, a purifying of our intentions, a prayerful disposition of the mind, a taste for spiritual things and many holy inspirations. The sprinkling of holy water is on this account a very excellent preparation for prayer and for devout assistance at the holy sacrifice of the Mass. It is for this very reason that the Church prescribes the Asperges before the High Mass. Distraction, worldly thoughts, sensual emotions are banished from our prayers by the effects of the holy water. We should, therefore, always use it before prayer and meditation and before entering a church, at the entrance of which we find a holy water basin.

So holy water enriches us with many spiritual graces. But it also bestows temporal favors and blessings upon us. It is a remedy against many bodily evils. It sometimes drives away disease. Sometimes it affects marvelous cures. In danger of life and limb it proves very powerful. It mitigates the fury of the elements, checks the raging storm and diverts the destructive bolt of lightning. However, these effects cannot be accurately determined; they are enshrined in the eternal decrees of divine Providence. But this fact does not make them less certain and less real. And if we use the blessed water

in the right manner, that is in a state of grace and with faith and confidence, we will share in them abundantly.

My dear friends: We have meditated on the significance of holy water and the ceremonies attending the blessing. They have inspired us with a profound respect for this water, blessed in such a solemn manner and with such august rites. There should be a holy water font in every Catholic home. That little fountain will be a source of grace and blessings to the whole family: Many a misfortune, many a threatening danger, many a temptation, many a pernicious influence will it keep away from the threshold, and benefit all going in and out. And may the words of the Antiphon voice the wish I have for you all: "I saw water coming forth from the temple on the right side; and all those to whom this water came were saved and shall say, Alleluia." Amen.

XXXIX. BLESSINGS OF MOTHERS AND CHILDREN

BY THE REV. CHARLES BRUEHL, D.D.

"His blessing hath overflowed like a river."—Eccl. xxxix, 27.

SYNOPSIS.—The threefold intention of the Church in every blessing. These intentions emphasized in the blessings of mother and child. The place of lawful motherhood in the Church. The sentiments contained in the prayers of the various blessings. Exhortation to mothers to reap the fruits of the Church's blessing.

II. After the example of Christ the Church has always blessed children. The various blessings. The sentiments expressed in the prayers. The love and solicitude of the Church for children. Her protecting influence. Church inculcates reverence for motherhood and childhood.

My dear friends: There is a triple meaning in the blessings which the Church bestows on her faithful children. They first of all contain an approval of the persons or the things which are blessed. Thus, if the Church gives her blessing to an enterprise, she thereby means to sanction the undertaking and publicly declares it to be good, just and praiseworthy. Never does the Church grant her blessing, where there is question of anything unlawful. In fact the highest form of approval and acknowledgment is a blessing.

In the second place, to bless means to wish well to one, to desire that things might prosper with him. We wish those well, with whose designs and efforts we sympathize. If we see a man set out on some noble mission, we wish him Godspeed. We bless one for his great and good intentions, for his generous activity in behalf of some sublime cause, for his exertions to promote the common weal of mankind. For everything pure and noble and elevated, for every unselfish thought, for every exalted purpose, for every splendid endeavor, for every worthy act we have a blessing. So does the Church wish well to all those who perform good deeds and to all those who, somehow or other, contribute to the common welfare and to the upbuilding of the kingdom of God.

Lastly, to bless means to invoke the name of God and to call down effectively His grace and help upon a person, a thing or an undertaking. In this way, the person or thing becomes an instru-

ment in the hands of God for the salvation of souls. For this end they are endowed with superior powers and receive a greater measure of peculiar graces.

There are blessings in the Church of God for numerous purposes and for various occasions. Especially has the Church provided blessings for those events, when men need grace and the assistance of almighty God in a more particular manner. The solemn and extraordinary moments of life are sanctified and consecrated by significant and appropriate blessings. The different states of life, the different ages have their own blessings. In granting her blessings the Church shows her predilection for some of her children, who are more deserving of them or who need them more urgently, or whom, for some good and sound reason, she wishes to distinguish above the others. So we see that the Church has special blessings for mothers and for children. By this she proclaims her esteem, her love and her care for them. We will meditate upon these blessings as they are very instructive and as they reveal to us the mind and heart of the Church.

I. Motherhood has always been held in high honor and esteem by the Church. By her blessings she places upon it the stamp of solemn approval. In the face of the world she loudly proclaims it to be true dignity, the crowning glory of woman. The sacrifices connected with motherhood, moreover, have a great power to ensure eternal salvation, according to the words of St. Paul: "Yet she shall be saved through child-bearing" (I Tim. ii, 15).

But the Church only sanctions and praises lawful motherhood, sacred and pure motherhood, such as is hallowed and authorized by holy wedlock, and which alone can be pleasing to the thrice holy God, who has instituted the Sacrament of Matrimony. She refuses her blessing and her approval to the unfortunate, sinful woman, that has become a mother without having a wedding ring. She admonishes the fallen mother to do penance and to seek the mercy of God, who rejects no one; but she cannot glorify what is the result of unhallowed passion and sin. Neither does she grant this blessing, which is a privilege of the Catholic mother, to non-Catholic women, though, as it happens in mixed marriages, their children are baptized in the Catholic Church. Likewise does she withhold her blessing from the mother that proves disloyal to her sacred trust, by raising her children in a non-Catholic religion. The blessing for mothers, accordingly, has the character of a reward and honorary

distinction and the Catholic mother should be proud and anxious to receive this blessing.

The Church rejoices with the happy mother. She heaps congratulations on her head. She exults in the great gain which comes to humanity and to the kingdom of God by Catholic motherhood. She encourages the mother by her good wishes, foretells her a happy future and assures that the sympathies of all noble men are with her. How delighted must the Catholic mother feel, to see such an enlightened understanding and such a profound appreciation of her high office on the part of the Church.

And finally, the Church asks God's special grace for the mother. She recommends her to our blessed Lady, the virginal Mother, in whom all motherhood was sanctified. She pleads in her behalf with God and claims heaven's choicest gifts for her. That is the attitude of the Church towards motherhood; she has for the mother words of approval, of congratulation, of encouragement and of benediction. We will see these thoughts reflected in the prayers of the Church pronounced over the mother.

There are two liturgical blessings for mothers to be found in the Roman ritual: one for the hour of trial, and the other for the completed event when her motherhood has become a happy reality.

In that dread moment, on which two precious lives may depend. a woman will be thankful for a prayer and a blessing. It will becalm her fears and diminish her anxiety. It will inspire her with confidence in God who is the Lord over life and death. The priest invokes God's mercy for mother and child. Making the sign of the Cross over her and sprinkling her with holy water, he asks of God that he may give the joy of motherhood to the suffering woman and the great boon of life and light to the little one. The angels are called upon to ward off malign influences and to bring peace and happiness to the home and all its inhabitants. This proceeding of the Church is in full harmony with the words of our Lord, which He uttered to His disciples when He was about to leave them: "A woman, when she is in labor, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world" (John xvi, 21). On account of the peculiar circumstances which naturally surround the coming of motherhood, and of the pharisaical delicacy of our modern times, this blessing is but rarely applied. However, I cannot see anything more calculated to allay the fears and the

anxiety which a young woman experiences at the approach of this great event. And if she knows that the Church is interested in her and that heaven and earth share her anxiety, she will bear up in the hour of anguish with true Christian heroism.

After the happy event the mother comes to the church. It is a very beautiful and touching custom, though not prescribed by the ritual, that she bring her child with her in order to offer it up to God, from whom she has received it. In this she should imitate the Blessed Virgin, who presented her only begotten Son in the temple, as was required by the law of Moses. Likewise did the mother of the prophet Samuel bring her child to the temple to thank God for the honor conferred on her. From the overflowing gratitude of her heart she spoke a wonderful prayer, vibrating with the ecstasy of happy motherhood: "My heart hath rejoiced in the Lord. There is none holy as the Lord is: for there is no other beside Thee, and there is none strong like our God. He raiseth up the needy from the dust, and lifteth up the poor from the dunghill: that He may sit with princes, and hold the throne of glory" (I. Kings ii, 1). There is no definite time set for this blessing, but the first time the mother leaves her home, after having gained her original strength, it should be for church. She informs the priest of her desire to be blessed or churched, as it is familiarly styled. The priest, wearing a surplice and white stole, sprinkles her with holy water and declares: "She shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God, her Saviour; because she belongs to the nation of those who seek the Lord." After giving this promise of God's blessing, he recites the twenty-third psalm. In this psalm the generosity and greatness of God are praised: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and all they that dwell therein." Of this fulness the mother has also received; to it she owes the glory of her fertility.

In the same psalm David insists on purity and integrity of intention as indispensable conditions for those who wish to enter the sanctuary: "Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord: or who shall stand in His holy place? The innocent in hands, and clean of heart, who hath not taken his soul in vain, nor sworn deceitfully to his neighbor." But as the Catholic mother is considered pure and blameless, since she has become mother under the august shadow of a Sacrament, there is nothing that could prevent her from taking her place in the house of God. The priest addresses her in the following words: "Enter into the temple of God,

worship the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who has conferred on you the grace of motherhood. Almighty and eternal God, who by the maternity of the blessed Virgin Mary hast converted the sufferings of mothers into joy; look down graciously on thy handmaid who has come to this temple to return Thee thanks in rejoicing. Grant that after this life she and her child may obtain the happiness of never-ending bliss through the merits and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, through Christ, our Lord."

Again sprinkling the woman, who holds a lighted candle in her hand, with holy water, the priest pronounces a final benediction: "May the peace and the grace of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, descend upon thee and remain with thee forever." The priest retires and the mother should spend some moments in silent recollection and thanksgiving.

No Catholic mother should forego this blessing. And, indeed, there is ample reason why a mother should be particularly eager to receive an abundant measure of God's graces. She needs them for herself, she needs them for her child. For Catholic motherhood imposes many a heavy burden and difficult task, and a heavy responsibility, on the frail shoulders of woman. And unless God's grace supports and seconds her efforts, she dare not hope to be loyal to her sublime mission. The child in the cradle or in the arms of its mother already needs the grace of heaven. And who should be the first one to pray for the helpless infant but its mother? On the occasion of her being churched she can easily fulfil this duty. She will thank God for having safely brought her through the dangers connected with motherhood and for having spared the little one that rested under her heart. She will thank Him that her child, flesh from her flesh, and bone from her bone, has been made a child of grace, regenerated to a higher life in the waters of Baptism. She will promise God to bring up the child that He has entrusted to her love and care in virtue, and to make it a worthy member of the Church. She will pray that the child she has brought into this world, at the very risk of her own life, may be her pride, her comfort, her consolation on earth, and her glory in heaven. And these prayers, welling up in the maternal heart and gushing forth from her lips, the Church gathers and carries to the throne of the Most High that they may not remain idle and ineffective human wishes, but that they may be fulfilled. That is the meaning of the blessing of the mother.

2. The Church has learned from her heavenly Master to love and cherish children. We all remember that beautiful scene of the holy Gospel wherein the love of our Lord for children is so pathetically portrayed. It has such infinite charms, it is of such inexhaustible sweetness that we cannot resist to relate it anew. St. Matthew tells us this story in simple but most attractive style: "Then were little children presented to Him, that He should lay His hands upon them and pray. And the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said to them: 'Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to me: for the kingdom of heaven is for such. And when He had laid His hands upon them, He departed thence" (xix, 13-15). It is from this example that the Church has learned her love for children. She shows this love effectually by the blessings with which she surrounds childhood. The infant nestled in its mother's arm is for the Church an object of special care and solicitude. The baby in its cradle can claim her love and affection and attention. The sickness of the little suffering ones finds her a good and thoughtful mother. Many blessings there are for children and for various circumstances. The Roman ritual contains a blessing for an infant in general, which may be imparted at any time to any child of infant age. We find in the ritual another blessing of general application to implore for the child the help of God. Then there is one to be pronounced over children, when they are gathered in the church for some reason. This blessing could be very appropriately applied at the occasion of the opening or the closing of school. It would give an additional solemnity to these important celebrations and place them under the propitious auspices of God. A particular blessing we have for a child afflicted with disease. The sick child is more helpless than the adult under the same conditions; it cannot even give expression to its ailments. Frequently it suffers, and its attendants cannot even guess the seat of the trouble. So the Church is mindful of the helpless little one and asks for it God's help, where human assistance is so unavailing. Another blessing remains to be mentioned: one for the little band of the Childhood of Jesus. All those enrolled in this little missionary society are entitled to a special blessing. The Church has always encouraged this society and enriched it with many spiritual privileges. Parents, especially mothers, should see that their children, though they be only infants, be enlisted in this society.

We will now meditate on the details of these different blessings.

The Church ushers the child into life with a blessing. This is done by the blessing of the infant. After the usual preliminaries, the priest recites over the infant-child a beautiful prayer. The wording is as follows: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, Thou was begotten before all times, yet Thou didst not disdain to become a child in the course of time. Thou lookst down with pleasure upon the innocence of this age. Thou hast embraced the little ones that were presented to Thee and blessed them. Bestow the sweet grace of Thy blessings upon this infant. Grant, that no malice may darken its soul. Let it grow in age, wisdom and grace, that it may always be pleasing to Thee." Then the priest sprinkles the child with holy water and again blesses it in the name of the most holy Trinity. What greater blessing, what more precious gift could a mother wish for her infant than that which the Church asks in this significant prayer. As the mothers living at the time of our Lord brought to Him their dear little ones, so should now mothers bring their infants to the Church, that the priest might lay his hands upon them and invoke his Master's name over them.

The second blessing to obtain the mercy of God for the child is very much like the first one. Again the priest appeals to Christ's love for children. He also asks God to consider the fidelity and piety of the parents. We know from the Old Testament that God visits the sin and crimes of the parents on the children, even to the third generation. But likewise will he reward the virtues and merits of the parents unto the third and fourth generation. It is not without reason that the Church recalls the merits of the parents, when she intercedes for the child. This time she asks, beside the spiritual blessings mentioned in the foregoing prayer, the gift of a happy and desirable old age.

Next we have the blessing to be spoken over the children when they are gathered in church. It is longer than the preceding ones, and bears a more solemn and official character. The usual graces of progress in virtue and holiness are asked for the children. They are, moreover, recommended to the Blessed Virgin Mary and, especially, to the angels. They are the natural guardians of childhood; they protect them against temporal and spiritual evils. Above all are they the jealous custodians of their innocence and purity. It is very befitting, accordingly, that the Church should entrust the frail destinies of infancy to these heaven-appointed and powerful patrons. In the liturgical prayer the Church alludes to the words of our Lord:

"Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father, who is in heaven" (Matt. xviii, 10).

Lastly, we have the blessing for sick children. It begins with the psalm Laudate pueri: "Praise the Lord, ye children: praise ye the name of the Lord." Then the priest beseeches God, who gives growth and strength to spare the tender age of childhood, to restore to the infirm and languishing infant the vigor of health, that it may attain to the fulness and maturity of years. In a second prayer the priest begs of God that he may give back to its parents the child hale and hearty, and that it may devote all the days of its life to justice and the practise of virtue. The blessing ends with the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John.

Then there is the special blessing intended for members of the society of the Childhood of Jesus. In contents and drift it is identical with the preceding; in its wording it is more emphatic and impressive; in its application it is restricted to the members of said society.

The blessings, which we have explained, meet all needs of childhood. They show the solicitude of the Church for the delicate age of infancy. She looks upon these little ones as a gardener would regard his choicest flowers. They grow and blossom in the garden of the Church, and they delight God and the angels and men.

Like garden flowers the little ones grew,
Nurtured and trained with tenderest care,
Warmed by love's sunshine, bathed in its dew,
They bloomed into beauty like roses rare.

Thus does the Church watch over the little ones which God has entrusted to her keeping.

My dear friends, these different blessings for mother and child teach the faithful to respect and honor motherhood and to surround the age of tender infancy with all cares and fond solicitude. Let us learn well this beautiful lesson from the Church. Respect for sacred motherhood and sweet childhood will regenerate our modern society that has fallen away from the lofty ideals of our fathers. Let us thank and honor the Church for her noble attitude in this matter. And with the Church we pray for the mother and the child and exalt them.

XL. BAPTISM

BY THE REV. W. LIEBER

"But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified."—I. Cor. vi, 11.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—I. Ceremonies in general. Ceremonies are natural to man. Their use in society. Their use in worship.
II. Ceremonies of Baptism.—(1) Meaning and symbolism of those that precede. (A word on the duty of sponsors.) (2) Those that accompany. (3) Those that follow the solemn administration of this Sacrament.

In the administration of the Sacraments, the Catholic Church makes use of forms and rites for the purpose either of better showing forth her faith and worship as in the case of holy Mass, or of exhibiting the dignity and the effects of the Sacraments when they are administered, the better to dispose the recipients by exciting greater attention and devotion.

Ceremonies are as old as the world. They are outward expressions of inward feelings. Man is a compound being; he is composed of soul and body; he must needs give utterance to his sentiments by outward gestures. There are few nations that do not supplement their language by some gestures. Some are even bound to have recourse to them, because of the poverty of their language. Our separated brethren who so greatly object to our ritual, as formalism, seem to be forgetful of the fact that all functions, both lay and clerical, are made up of ceremonies. What are our military parades, our presentations at court, our openings of Parliament, our patriotic rejoicings, but ceremonies? Why should they be deemed necessary at court, in society, in the army, in the masonic lodge, and rejected from public worship? Is it fair on the part of our non-Catholic friends, who approve of worldly forms and ceremonies for which they often cannot see the "raison d'être," to denounce our ritual as silly and superstitious, when they have not the slightest knowledge of its inward signification? Why, in our rites there is not a sign or gesture made, or action performed, but has its meaning and symbolism to the initiated.

From the beginning ceremonies have especially been used in connection with divine worship. We read in the Bible of the offerings

and sacrifices of the patriarchs of old, and in the book of Exodus, Numbers and Leviticus, we read of the minute ceremonial and ritual of Moses sanctioned by the Almighty. We further learn that Christ did not condemn outward ceremonial. He not only attended the sacrifices and other holy functions in the Temple, but practised forms and ceremonies Himself, when curing the deaf and dumb and the blind, when commissioning His apostles, when prostrating Himself with His face to the ground before His eternal Father. Parts of these very ceremonies we find reproduced in the rites that precede Baptism, as we shall see presently.

Perhaps, with the exception of Holy Orders, the administration of no Sacrament is so elaborate as that of Baptism. The Church, no doubt, wishes thereby to impress the recipient and the attendants with the importance of this rite. It is the first and most necessary of the Sacraments, and therefore termed, sometimes, the "gate of all the Sacraments." It is the incorporation into the mystical body of Christ, the holy Catholic Church, and entitles us to participate in all the privileges of a Christian here on earth, and to look forward to the everlasting bliss of the Church triumphant in heaven.

However, in the administration of Baptism we must distinguish between that part of the rite which is essential for producing the effects of the Sacrament, and the added ceremonies performed by the priest, *e. g.*, the use of blessed salt, the exorcisms, the manifold unctions and blessings prescribed by the rubrics. These ceremonies are omitted when Baptism is administered privately. Though not essential to the validity of the Sacrament, they are on no account to be suppressed in the solemn ministration. When omitted, in case of necessity, they ought to be supplied later on, if possible. The baptismal ceremonies are recommended as well by their venerable antiquity as by their imposing symbolism and majestic wording. And, indeed, the apostolic constitutions, the oldest sacramentaries, the fathers of the second and third centuries, mention them, not as rites that had been subsequently introduced, but as already observed in the primitive days of Christendom. Therefore, in suppressing them as superstitious, our separated brethren have thereby shown that their belief concerning this Sacrament of Regeneration has ceased to be what it used to be in the early ages of faith.

The baptismal ceremonial is evidently meant to give us Christians an exalted idea of the grace we receive through the Sacrament, and

to impress upon us the grave obligations entailed upon the receiver of Baptism.

Let us, therefore, study as closely as we can, the ceremonies: first, that precede; second, accompany; and, third, follow the solemn administration of this important Sacrament.

One of the chief requisites, before the solemn administration of baptism, is the choice of sponsors, or God-parents.

They are called on, first, to answer, in the name of the baptized, to all the interrogations of Baptism; secondly, to be guardians of their spiritual life for the future. They used to be called "guarantors." As in the case of prudent men of business who, when appointing to responsible positions demand security, so the Church in the case of the baptismal obligations requires "guarantors" who will answer for the discharge of the obligations of the children to God in case the parents neglect their solemn duty. When the parents are practical Catholics, the sponsors may presume that due Christian education will be provided by the father and mother, who, of course, are primarily responsible; but be it well understood that when the parents fail in these religious duties, the office of the god-parent calls for action. The choice, therefore, of such persons is a serious consideration. They should be of the age of puberty, thorough Catholics, and willing to accept their responsibility. Next to a judicious choice of sponsors comes the selection of a baptismal name to be given to the child, and the ritual recommends the parents to impose the name of a saint that the child may profit by his patronage and example. The person to be baptized is kept in the porch of the church, or before the entrance of the baptistry, to signify that before being a Christian, he is not worthy to be admitted into the House of God. Having no right to enter heaven, so he has no right to enter the church. The priest, robed in a surplice, whose whiteness is symbolic of the innocence he is going to impart, and a purple stole, the color used by the Church on days of sadness and mourning (pointing out the miserable state to which sin has reduced all children of Adam), goes forth to meet the candidate whom he addresses in the following words: "What dost thou ask of the Church of God? The person to be baptized or the sponsor answers, "Faith," and the minister proceeds: "What does faith bring to the?" "Life everlasting," is the reply. "If, then, thou desirest to enter life," continues the priest, "keep the Commandments. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole

heart, with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."

Thereupon the priest breathes three times in the face of the candidate, while he orders satan to withdraw and make place for the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete. St. Augustine refers to this ceremony as a proof against the Pelagians, of the existence of original sin, showing that even newborn infants are infected with it, and hence subject to the power of the devil, who, by the exorcism of the priest, is expelled.

From the outset these ceremonies tend to show our miserable state previous to our christening. We were all slaves of the devil, children of Divine wrath. Admire, therefore, the power God has bestowed upon His priests in banishing satan from our souls. The breath is symbolical of the breath of God in creation, when He animated the human body with the breath of life. In this first generation man received natural life "in animam viventem," but in this regeneration he receives a supernatural life, "in spiritum vivificantem." This breath is also symbolical of that of Christ breathing upon the apostles when commissioning them and empowering them to forgive sins "and when He had said this, He breathed on them and saith unto them, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.'" The priest then signs the candidate on forehead and breast with the sign of the Cross, to demonstrate, first, that Baptism draws all its virtue and efficacy from the passion and Cross of the Saviour; and, secondly, to signify that the recipient is consecrated to Jesus crucified; that, marked with this sign, he belongs henceforth to the flock of the Divine Pastor, whose voice and maxims he is to obey without ever heeding the strange doctrines of false prophets. As by the livery of a servant we get to know the master he serves, so by the Cross, which is the livery of the Christian, the world will know that he belongs to the divine Master, Christ Jesus. The sign of the Cross is marked on the forehead to warn the Christian never to blush at being a disciple of Christ crucified. It is marked on the breast to show that he must love and embrace the Cross, that his life is not to be a life of pleasure, but a life of toil and suffering, and therefore should, as the apostle, glory in nothing save in the Cross of Jesus. "But God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi, 14).

After these signs of the Cross, the minister continues praying for

the catechumen, placing his hand upon his head to signify that he has become a victim to be consecrated to the Divinity. Then, having blessed some salt, which he places in the mouth of the child, the priest says: "Take the salt of wisdom, that the Lord may preserve thee and conduce thee to life eternal." Salt is the emblem of the purification from sin, for the priest begs God to preserve the child from all infection of vice, so that he may be disposed ever to receive more abundant graces. Blessed salt is given to convey the taste of spirituality, that the word of God may not prove insipid to the Christian, but that he may recognize by experience the sweetness of the Lord and of His service. Salt, again, is the symbol of wisdom, which is to direct the disciple of Christ in all his doings and impede him from acting foolishly or against the law of God. Lastly, this salt means that Baptism is the pledge of a future glorious and incorruptible resurrection. The priest resumes the exorcism and commands satan in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to quit the soul of God's servant: "He that commands thee is the same that walked on the mighty deep and stretched out His hand to Peter about to perish in the waves. Hence acknowledge thy sentence, O, thou cursed one, return honor to the true and living God, render honor to Jesus Christ, His Son, and to the Holy Spirit; withdraw from this servant whom our Lord has deigned to call to the grace of baptism." In concluding this prayer the priest again traces the shape of the Cross on the catechumen's head and adds: "And thou beware, cursed satan, of ever having the audacity to violate this sign of the holy Cross which I impress upon his forehead."

This being done, the priest places a second time his hand upon the catechumen and begs of God, the author of light and truth, to let shine down upon him the light of heavenly knowledge to purify and sanctify him, in order that he may ever have a strong hope and right judgment, and follow the holy doctrine. Now, being no longer the property of the devil, but of God, he is introduced into the Church by the priest, who, laying the end of his stole on the head of the catechumen, says: "Come into the temple of God, that thou mayest have part with Christ unto life everlasting," and as, according to St. Paul, "He that cometh to God must believe that He is" (Heb. xi, 6), the candidate or the sponsor on his behalf is requested to recite the Apostle's Creed, which, in former days, was expounded to the catechumens, who had to know and understand every article

thereof ere they were admitted to the Sacrament. After the Creed, the Lord's Prayer is said, to show that it is only by the means of prayer that the Christian is able to live up to his belief. The priest, then, touching with his saliva the ears of the child, exclaims: "Ephpheta, be thou opened." This reminds us of a passage of St. Mark (vii, 33, 34), where it is said that when about to cure the deaf and dumb man, Christ "put His fingers into his ears, and spitting, He touched his tongue; and, looking up to heaven, He said: 'Ephpheta,' which is, 'Be thou opened.'" After this, the priest, touching the candidate's nostrils, adds: "In the odor of sweetness." This rite means that the child must never close his ears to the promises of God, nor to His laws, nor to the evangelical counsels; that he must listen to the divine Word, and that his soul, as a docile lamb, must only know the voice of the divine Pastor. The nostrils are touched to show that the Christian must remain insensible to the infection and allurements of sin and perceive only the salutary odor of God, must become himself, in fact, the sweet fragrance of Jesus in inducing others to the practice of virtue by his good example. But among the ceremonies that accompany Baptism there is none so imposing as that of the baptismal vows or the renouncing of the devil, his works and pomps. From all the vows that are taken in after life we may obtain a dispensation, while no power in heaven or earth can dispense us from our baptismal vows. The first renouncing exacted is that of the devil; it is the renouncing of his power and tyranny, and the taking of Christ as our Master. No one can serve two masters, hence no one can be Christ's servant and at the same time a servant of the devil. The second is that of the devil's works, which is sin, especially that of pride, which changed the angel of light into an angel of darkness, and constitutes the root of all sins.

The third is that of the devil's pomps, all illicit desires, vanity, ambition, luxury, sensuality, and the pleasures of the world of which satan is the prince. After this solemn declaration, the minister, dipping his finger in the oil of the catechumens, anoints the breast and shoulders of the child; the breast, to make it love the yoke of Christ; the shoulders, to give it strength to carry the yoke. This anointing is done with oil to denote the sweetness of this yoke. In fine, the Church requires of the candidate a solemn profession of his faith in the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Church, this being intended to impress upon us the necessity of faith in

those receiving the Sacrament, for he alone "that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved." Further, in conformity with ancient discipline, not to give this Sacrament to adults unless they previously expressed the desire of receiving it, and also in imitation of our Lord, who, before healing the sick, asked if they wished for recovery, the Church requires the minister to ascertain whether the candidate is willing to be baptized. The answer being given on behalf of the child, "I will," the priest pours water over the head of the candidate while pronouncing the words prescribed by Christ: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." To comply with the rubrics there should be physical contact during the pouring of the water between the sponsor and his godchild. The prevailing practise of actually placing the hand on the child is all that is required. Immediately after Baptism the minister anoints with chrism the forehead of the new Christian, to signify, first, that he has become a member of Jesus Christ; and, secondly, to show that he has been elevated to the dignity both of king and priest; of king, to conquer the devil, the world and the flesh; of priest, to offer to God the sacrifice of his mind, heart and body. A white cloth is presently thrown over the neophite by the priest, who says: "Receive this white garment and carry it without stain before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ." In the primitive Church the newly baptized were invested in a white garment, which they used to wear for a whole week. This cloth or garment is a symbol of the robe of innocence. A lighted candle is next handed to the person baptized or to the sponsor, while the priest utters these beautiful words: "Receive this burning light, and keep thy Baptism, so as to be without blame; keep the Commandments of God, that when the Lord shall come to the nuptials thou mayest meet Him in the company of the saints in the heavenly court, and have eternal life, and live for ever and ever. Amen." This lighted taper represents the theological virtues, which are infused by virtue of the Sacrament. The light is the symbol of faith; the heat denotes charity; and the flame itself speaks of hope aspiring after heaven. At the conclusion of the ceremony the priest dismisses the party with a valedictory blessing: "Go in peace and the Lord be with you."

Dear brethren, Baptism, along with all the rites, the blessings and vows I have explained, will not suffice for your salvation unless you remain faithful to the obligations you have assumed. Remember, then, the covenant that was sealed between you and your God on

the day of your christening. Be true to your word, and renew your baptismal vows from time to time. Be ever mindful of your dignity as Christians in the midst of the temptations of this world, "but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." Amen.

XLI. CONFIRMATION

BY THE REV. W. LIEBER

"Be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of His power. Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil."—I. Cor., vi, 10, 11.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Confirmation is a true Sacrament, distinct from Baptism. Its manifold effects on the soul. These effects are typified by the sacramental sign and ceremonial: (1) *The imposition of hands;* (2) *the unction;* (3) *the symbolical blow.*

Confirmation is placed second on the list of the Sacraments, for two reasons: The first is, that in the early Church it was conferred immediately after Baptism. The second is, that Confirmation is the complement of Baptism. However, we must not think it therefore one and the same Sacrament as the first, nor is it a mere rite or public profession of faith in the presence of the Bishop, as it is understood by our Anglican brethren, but a true distinct Sacrament. In a remarkable passage (Praescr. 40), Tertullian places this "sealing of the soldiers on the forehead" between Baptism and the Eucharist, plainly indicating thereby that Confirmation is a "true and proper Sacrament" according to the Tridentine doctrine. The same difference that exists in the natural life between birth and growth, exists also in the supernatural, between Baptism, which gives spiritual life, and Confirmation, which strengthens it. By the former we are begotten to newness of life, by the latter, we grow to full maturity, "having put away the things of a child." In Baptism, we are made the temples of the Holy Ghost; in Confirmation, we receive Him in all His plenitude of graces. In Baptism, we are enlisted as soldiers of Jesus Christ; in Confirmation, we are equipped for the battle, and our weapons are handed to us. It is, therefore, a distinct Sacrament, administered to us by the Bishop, by which we receive the grace of fortitude from the Holy Ghost to profess courageously the Faith we have already received in Baptism. It produces an increase of sanctifying grace, perfecting that which we have already received, granting also an actual grace, consisting of strength to profess our faith openly, and to overcome

human respect and to lead thoroughly Christian lives, despite the examples and railleries of the world. But, above all, Confirmation communicates the Holy Ghost to us with all His gifts, and, hence, the three Persons of the blessed Trinity contribute to our sanctification and our happiness. The Father adopts us in Baptism. The Son gives Himself in Holy Communion. The Holy Spirit gives Himself in Confirmation, and lavishes on our souls the same inward graces and gifts with which He strengthened the Apostles. All these effects of Confirmation are typified by the sacramental sign and the ceremonial that accompany its administration.

The remote matter of this Sacrament is holy chrism, a mixture of olive oil and Eastern balsam. There are three kinds of holy oils used in the administration of the Sacraments, and which the Bishop consecrates on Maundy Thursday: the oil of catechumens, used in Baptism, the oil for the sick, used in Extreme Unction, and holy chrism, the remote matter of Confirmation. "Nor, indeed," says the Catechism of the Council of Trent, "could any other matter than that of chrism seem more appropriate to declare the effects of this Sacrament; for oil, by its nature unctuous and fluid, expresses the plenitude of grace, which, through the Holy Ghost, overflows and is poured into others from Christ, the head, "like the anointment on the head that ran down upon the beard of Aaron, to the skirt of his garment" (Ps. cxxxii, 2); for him "God anointed with the oil of gladness above" his fellows (Ps. xliv, 8), and "of his fulness we have all received" (St. John, 16).

Chrism, as we have already said, is a mixture of balsam and olive oil. Balsam is an oily substance, more or less liquid, naturally flowing from some Eastern trees when an incision is made on them. It is very odoriferous and endowed with medicinal properties. Its perfume is symbolical of the fragrance of virtue, which a confirmed Christian ought to spread about him, for, according to the Apostle, "we are the good odor of Christ and God" for the edification of the faithful. Balsam is also a preservative against corruption. This Sacrament helps to preserve us from the corruption of sin. The effect of oil, on the other hand, is to soften and to add vigor. It, moreover, diffuses an agreeable light when enkindled. So in Confirmation our hearts are softened, yet invigorated, and our minds illuminated from above. As the ancient athletes were anointed before their contests in the arena, so the young soldier of Christ is prepared for the "good fight" which lies before him. Both the oil and

balsam are symbolical of Christian humility and meekness, for balsam sinks into the liquid, into which it is poured, and thereby denotes humility; whereas oil always floats on the surface, teaching man to rise superior to the vexations of life by unfailing meekness. We shall now see how holy chrism is applied in Confirmation. The following is the ceremonial observed: The Bishop, seated, washes his hands to show the great purity required for the reception and administration of this Sacrament, puts on his rochet, the symbol of innocence, his stole, the sign of his authority, and, vested in his cope, gives an instruction to the candidates. After this, he makes over them the following invocations: "May the Holy Ghost descend on you, and may the virtue of the Most High preserve you from all sin. Our help is in the name of the Lord," and the assistants answer: "Who made heaven and earth." "O Lord, hear my prayer," adds the Bishop, and the assistants join in: "And let my cry come unto Thee." Spreading his hands over those to be confirmed, he proceeds with the following prayer: "O eternal and almighty God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate with water and the Holy Ghost Thy servants and Who hast granted them the forgiveness of all their sins, send upon them from the summit of heaven Thy Paraclete, the author of all gifts. Amen. The Spirit of wisdom and understanding. Amen. The spirit of counsel and fortitude. Amen. The spirit of knowledge and piety. Amen. Fill them with the spirit of fear, and calling them to eternal life. Sign them with the sign of the Cross of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the same Holy Ghost for ever and ever. Amen." During this prayer the receivers of Confirmation kneel and endeavor by their devotion to enter into the feelings of the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles when they were expecting the Holy Ghost with his sevenfold gift. They ask for the spirit of *wisdom,* that they may once for all understand wherein consists man's true felicity. The spirit of *understanding,* that by His divine light they may acquire the knowledge of the truths and mysteries of religion. The spirit of *counsel,* to discern the mode of action in difficult situations of life, and thus ever accomplish God's holy will. The spirit of *strength,* in order to resist vigorously the assaults of the enemies of salvation. The spirit of *knowledge,* to realize the greatness of God and both the nobility and misery of their souls. The spirit of *piety,* to enable them to carry out with cheerfulness and love all that may be pleasing to God. The spirit of *fear,*

which prevents the commission even of the slightest fault against God.

The candidates are then led to the altar by their Godparents or sponsors, who are required for Confirmation as well as for Baptism. [Young soldiers require a drill-master to train them in the arts of attack and defense. With much more reason do the soldiers of Christ require a skilful instructor to teach them the manner of using the powerful weapons placed in their hands. Their "wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and power, against the spirit of wickedness in the high places."] They approach singly and kneel before the Bishop, who, with the chrism we have spoken of, makes upon their forehead the sign of the Cross, saying: "I sign thee with the sign of the Cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Then he gives them a slight blow upon the cheek, saying: "Peace be with thee." When all have been confirmed, the Bishop purifies his hands, while an antiphon is sung, beseeching God to complete the work which He has begun. At the conclusion of this the Bishop rises, looking towards the altar, says the versicles and prayer; then, turning towards the confirmed, he gives them his blessing in these words: "May the Lord bless you from the height of heaven, that all the days of your lives you may see the good things of Jerusalem, and that you may obtain eternal life." Having given the newly confirmed another address, called the "admonition," he enjoins them to repeat the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Angelic Salutation, which they do before leaving the church. All now depart after the rendering of the Psalm, "Laudate Dominum," which is most appropriate as an expression of gratitude and gladness for the blessings received. From this ceremonial, we clearly notice the proximate matter and form of Confirmation. The proximate matter is the unction with chrism applied through the imposition of hands, and the form are the words pronounced during the unction: "I sign thee with the sign of the Cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name," etc.

Now, a form ought to express all that is contained in a Sacrament; we find, therefore, that these words are most suitable as expressing three elements: the cause, the effect, and the sign. The cause which conveys the plenitude of spiritual strength is the ever-blessed Trinity expressed by the words in the name of the Father,

. . . The effect is the spiritual strength communicated by the Sacrament, and is expressed by the unction accompanied by the words, "I confirm thee . . ." The sign which is given to the Christian soldier is expressed by the word "I sign thee with the sign of the Cross, the great symbol by which our great Captain Jesus conquered, and by which we shall conquer. The unction is made on the forehead for a very appropriate reason. The sign of the soldier must be conspicuous. According to the Angelic Doctor, two obstacles stand in the way of a manful confession of our Lord: fear and shame. These two feelings are manifested chiefly on the forehead: fear whitens it, shame reddens it. Hence the sacred unction is made on the forehead to teach him who is confirmed that neither fear nor shame ought ever to hinder him from appearing a Christian. That the grace of Confirmation dispels fear and puts down shame, we may see from the effects of the Holy Ghost on the apostles. At the time of the Passion they were so fearful and timid that they took to flight as soon as they saw their Master arrested. Peter, himself their head and leader, was frightened at the voice of a woman and cowardly denied our Lord, and all the apostles shut themselves up in a house for fear of the Jews. Pentecost comes, the Holy Ghost descends upon them and lo, they are changed men, filled with fortitude; they display undaunted courage. From being lambs of bashfulness, they turn lions of bravery. They face the Jews and reproach them with Deicide. They are no longer ashamed of the Master, but glory in His Cross. This same fortitude they convey in Confirmation to their disciples, who, at their example, face persecution and torments rather than renounce their faith. Daily exposed to the risk of being dragged from the font to the amphitheater, Confirmation was given them immediately after Baptism, as it is still done in some countries. Pentecost is a subsisting mystery in the Church. The same spirit that fortified the apostles and the early Christians descends still actually and verily upon us, not indeed with the same splendor and prodigy, but with the same inward effects of fortitude. What ought we to think, then, of so many Christians who are ashamed to declare their faith, who remain silent when they should speak, who remain idle when they should act, but that they resist the grace received in Confirmation. You, at least, brethren, as true disciples of Christ, should be ever disposed openly and resolutely to confess His Name; be not ashamed of the gospel maxims; never

show a cowardly fear of men. Trample on human respect, not only speak up, but labor with courage for the cause of God and His Church, according to your ability never being disheartened at the greatness of the obstacles you shall have to surmount. The Spirit of God will afford you strength to overcome the world. After anointing the forehead with chrism, the Bishop gives the confirmed a slight blow on the cheek, to warn him that he must be ready to suffer for Christ. This rite reminds us of a similar ceremony enacted in the days of chivalry, when young warriors were dubbed knights by a smart blow of the sword. This ceremony was preceded by fasting, confession, and a midnight vigil in the church, followed by the reception of holy Communion. The new knight offered his sword on the altar to signify his devotion to the Church and his determination to lead a holy life. It was blessed and buckled on generally by a Bishop. The title was conferred by fastening the sword and spurs on the candidate, after which the person who conferred the order dealt him a blow on the shoulder, saying: "Be thou a good and faithful knight." The new knight then took a solemn oath to protect the distressed, to maintain right against might, and never by word or deed to stain his character as a knight and a Christian. The symbolical blow in Confirmation teaches that the soldier of Jesus Christ must be disposed to suffer blows and persecution for the practise of religion. As a knight, he must prepare by prayer and the reception of the Sacraments, and be determined to lead a holy life, and promise God never by word or deed to stain his character as a Christian and soldier of Christ. He must be ready to sacrifice all things, even his life, if necessary, for the sake of God and religion.

People will say: "Persecutions have ceased. No longer, as in the early ages, do tyrants arise to rob us of the treasure of Faith." True, brethren, in this age of religious tolerance no coercion is generally used to make us apostatize. Fire and sword are no longer resorted to, in order to tear the faith from our hearts; still, a sharp, cruel instrument of torture is in store for those who wish to remain staunch knights of Christ Jesus; it is the tongue of man, ready to vomit blasphemy against religion, ridicule upon her dogmas and practises, bitter railleries at any one determined to live up to the standard of Christian perfection and to refuse to follow the mass of pleasure-seekers and of slaves of worldly maxims and customs. A Christian requires great strength, indeed, to resist these insidious assaults

and keep aloof from the numerous allurements of the age. Suppose the world has no attractions for you, will not satan step in and try to tempt you? Ah, Scripture tells you that this your adversary like a roaring lion "goeth about, seeking whom he may devour." And yet there is another enemy even more dangerous and more to be feared, because he dwells within our very selves. It is our concupiscence, our flesh lusting against the Spirit, that foe of which the Apostle speaks as fighting against the law of our mind and captivating us in the law of sin.

"Life on earth is all a warfare. Therefore, take you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day," the day of temptation. Be not disheartened at the thought of your weakness. The grace of Confirmation will prove a powerful weapon when needed. "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. In all things taking the shield of faith, whereby you may extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one and take unto you the helmet of salvation; and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Amen.

XLII. HOLY COMMUNION

BY THE REV. FRANCIS P. DUFFY

"Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam tuam in vitam aeternam. Amen. The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto life everlasting. Amen."

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—The Holy Eucharist both a sacrifice and a Sacrament. The Communion an integral part of the Mass.

I. Communion during Mass. (a) The priests' Communion. The prayer for peace and the "Pax." The purging prayers. "Domini, non sum dignus." "Quid retribuam"? (b) Communion of the faithful. The reality of Christ's presence. The privilege of Catholics. The gladness of Christ. Preparation for Communion. The "Confiteor." The words of administration. Develop "Corpus Domini—custodiat—in vitam aeternam."

II. The Communion of the sick. Christ's willingness to help as shown during His life on earth. So He causes Himself to be carried to the needy, in Catholic countries, in missionary lands, in our own cities, to mansion or attic. "Pax huic domui." The preparation for His coming. The rite of administration. "Viaticum," its original meaning, its suggestiveness. "Mane, nobiscum, Domine.

When our Lord Jesus Christ at the Last Supper took bread, and, breaking it, gave to His disciples, saying: "This is my Body," He instituted at once a sacrifice and a Sacrament. And the Liturgy of our Mass, which is only an elaboration of the Liturgy used by our Lord at the Last Supper, is arranged to bring out these elements in two dramatic climaxes: a central one in the consecration, and a final one in the Commmunion. At the moment of consecration our divine Lord comes down from His throne in heaven to dwell amongst us under the humble species of bread and wine, to be evermore the Victim for our transgression. While abiding with us in the Sacred Host, He may fulfil a variety of helpful and loving offices: He may consent for a time to remain in the silence of the tabernacle, drawing us towards Him and filling our hearts with grace and peace; He may be carried amongst us in procession, or raised in a monstrance on a golden throne for adoration, or lifted above our bowed heads in benediction. But in every Mass there is at least one Communion, and each Holy Host is destined, in the ordinary course of events, to sate the hunger of some needy human heart in the Sacrament of Love.

The liturgical action of the latter portion of the Holy Sacrifice

centers around the Communion. The *Pater Noster* is said, the Sacred Host is broken, and a portion mingled with the Precious Blood. Then is heard the solemn voice of the priest in the words of the *Agnus Dei,* imploring mercy and peace for the living or eternal rest for the dead. "O Lord Jesus Christ," he goes on to say, "Thou, who didst say to Thine Apostles: 'My peace I leave you; My peace I give unto you; consider not My sins, but the faith of Thy Church, and grant unto it peace and unity in accordance with Thy will, who livest and reignest God forever and ever. Amen.'" It was at the Last Supper, the First Communion service, that our Lord prayed so earnestly to His heavenly Father that His little flock should be one, that peace and unity should prevail among its members. And from the earliest ages of the Church it has been this Sacrament of Communion that has been the external sign and the internal source of unity among His followers. In solemn Masses there follows a beautiful ceremony which takes us back to the assemblies of the primitive Christians. It is the kiss of peace. The celebrant embraces the deacon, saying: "Peace be with you," to which the latter replies, "And with thy Spirit." With the same form of words the sign of brotherhood and peace is passed from one to another by those in the sanctuary.

The priest meanwhile turns to the altar and says the two purging prayers. No man can draw near to this God of Holiness and Purity without feeling most keenly his own unworthiness and sinfulness. And yet, it is only to Christ Himself that we can go for the grace to make us less unworthy. Accordingly, the priest addresses the Lord, there before His eyes, "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, who by the will of the Father and with the aid of the Holy Spirit has by Thy death given life to the world, deliver me by this Thy Sacred Body and Blood from all mine iniquities." Strengthened by his confidence in the goodness of his Saviour, the priest reverently takes the Host in his hands, and says: "I will take the Bread of heaven, and will call upon the Name of the Lord." He then thrice addresses the Lord in that beautiful aspiration of humility and faith, *Domine, non sum dignus,* "O Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed." It is almost literally the prayer of the centurion which of old won from Christ not only a miracle, but also the strong words of praise, "I have not found so great faith in Israel."

The great moment has arrived, the moment when God and His creatures meet in a union which surpasses in intimacy and completeness any other form of union on earth. The priest signs himself with the Sacred Host and receives it reverently, saying: "May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul unto life everlasting. Amen." The loving gratitude that surges up in his soul, the desire to do something in return for such love, is well expressed in the words of the Psalmist which the Church places next on his lips: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all the things that He has rendered unto me?" How can I ever repay you for your kindness, is the question which always rises from a grateful heart when a great favor is conferred by a friend. It is often difficult enough to think of some way of returning the kindness of our fellow mortals. What, then, must be the task of finding any fit recompense for favors, such overwhelming favors, from the loving kindness of the Omnipotent God conferring Himself upon us. We have nothing to offer Him that is in any way worthy of His acceptance. We have nothing to offer Him that He has not given us. But stay! there is one gift that He has given us, a gift worthy of Him, which He will allow us to offer back to Him. It is Himself. And so the priest continues: "I will take the chalice of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord." He takes the chalice, and consumes the Precious Blood.

Meanwhile the tinkling of the bell has brought to the altar-rail devout and needy souls who thirst for a share in the precious Gift which is there dispensed without money and without price. Where faith and piety abound they throng to greet him, even as in the days when He walked the earth, the people flocked to bask in the light of this kindly smile, to hear His voice speaking words of wisdom and consolation, to watch His wonderful deeds of mercy, to see the cripple leap with gladness, and the scales fall from the leper as the new blood ran coursing through his veins; or, greater miracle yet, to see the tears run down the face of the hardened sinner as he acknowledged his crimes and received the glorious promise of forgiveness. Oh! it is a blessed thing to feel that the Lord is with us yet, not only as a memory of the gracious days of the far distant past, but here and now, as real for us as for those with whom he sojourned for a time in Judea and Galilee. For a pious Protestant who loves our Lord, there must be a sense of something lacking in his power of intercourse with Him, a feeling that he is denied a

full share in the privileges possessed by those more favored souls of long ago who were able to enjoy His sweet intercourse and see Him face to face. Poor souls! They have not estimated the greatness of His love. If they could know Him fully they would know that it was impossible for Him to leave His loved ones orphans; they would feel that love such as His must find a way to come to all as He came to Peter and John, to Martha and Mary. The promise of the Real Presence is given not only in the explicit words, but in the whole character and history of Christ.

But we who have the faith and who know the Gift that is ours, we should be eager to enjoy our blessed privilege of receiving Him in our souls. He is anxious to have us come. Oh, my friends, it is a happy morning for the Sacred Heart of Jesus when He looks down from His altar and sees throngs of His faithful coming forward to receive Him. How gladly He scans each countenance and looks into each heart. There are the innocent and pure, whom He shall preserve in their purity. There are some who are freshly shriven from the stains of grievous sin in the Sacrament of reconciliation; these He shall support and strengthen in their new-made resolutions; they are dear to Him, dearer than ever, we might almost say, by very reason of their sins and their greater need of His help. There are some who are still cold and sluggish; He shall warm their frigid hearts by the fervor of His Heart beating against theirs. There are chosen and devoted souls, too, whose love He shall fan into a flame that will be light and warmth to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Thus He reflects as He watches them coming up to receive Him. They kneel devoutly at the rail. They have prepared their souls and bodies for this banquet of which they are about to partake; their souls by confession and by fervent prayer, their bodies by the observance of the Communion fast, according to the custom which has prevailed in the Church from time immemorial. The *Confiteor,* said aloud by the acolyte, finds an echo in every heart: "Almighty God, before Thee I confess my sins, before Thee and before all Thy court in heaven grievously have I offended Thee, in thought and word and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. O, dear Mother Mary, and all ye friendly saints above, pray to the Lord our God for me." With bowed heads, and signing the Cross upon their breast, they receive the blessing of the priest: "May almighty God have mercy upon you

and forgive you your sins, and bring you unto life everlasting. Amen. May the almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, absolution and remission of your sins. Amen."

Then the priest turns to them, holding the blessed Sacrament up before them, and says, in the words with which John the Baptist announced Jesus to the multitude at the beginning of His public mission: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world." Then, as before his own Communion, he thrice repeats the *Domini non sum dignus.* He advances to the kneeling communicants and places gently on the tongue of each the blessed Sacrament, saying, "*Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam tuam in vitam aeternam. Amen.* The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto life everlasting. Amen." The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ—that Body which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity took to Himself in the chaste womb of the blessed Virgin Mary; and not the Body alone, but the Soul and Divinity, Jesus Christ Himself, true God and true Man, really and truly present as He was in the manger at Bethlehem, as He was on the Cross of Calvary, as He is at the right hand of the Father in heaven. "Preserve the soul" from all evil, from all danger, from the snares of the evil one, from the wrath to come. "Unto life everlasting," it is this Body of the risen Christ that is the pledge of our immortality, for has He not Himself said: "He that eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood hath eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day."

Such, my brethren, is the Liturgy of the holy Sacrament as administered during the Mass. Brief is the form of words, and speedy the action; there is no tantalizing delay to stay the devout soul from the object of her love. Brief words, but how filled with meaning, how suggestive of all the varied emotions which possess us when we approach to receive the Lord: humility and contrition, confidence and hope, love, and peace, and thanksgiving, and the blessed assurance of the strength of God to preserve our souls unto life everlasting.

But as our Lord's impatient love is not satisfied with merely remaining in the tabernacle until we come to meet Him, just as of old He could not content Himself with the peace and bliss of heaven, but was constrained by His pity to come down to the aid of lost and stricken humanity, so even now He goes forth from His Tabernacle to the help of those who cannot come to Him. When

He sees His faithful beset by illness and threatened with death, He bids His priests to bear Him forth from the church to bring strength and consolation to them in their hour of trial. Of old He went with His apostles on such missions of kindness over the hills of Judea or by the Sea of Galilee, in the hot and dusty day, or when the quiet stars of night were twinkling in the heavens. Through the narrow streets of Old-World towns he went, or into quaint flat-roofed villages, a gentle, helpful Presence, bringing peace and consolation to all who would accept His ministry. And from that day to this His entering love has never faltered in its work of mercy. He has walked with His priests along the ways of all the world. In His desire to communicate Himself to mankind He has gone with them, He bringing them rather than they bringing Him, through cities and plains, over seas and mountains, to the uttermost parts of the earth, sharing in their triumphs and in their persecutions, stimulating them to still greater efforts for the souls for whom He Himself has sacrificed so much.

And to-day throughout the world His ears are still quick to hear the call for help, just as through the din of the joyful procession He heard the quavering voice of the blind beggar by the roadside calling, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me." From beds of sickness and pain that cry still comes. And it matters not to Him whether it comes from one who has always loved and served Him or from one who turns to Him on the brink of despair after a life of sin. In every case He rises up quickly and goes forth to give Himself entirely to the soul that needs His presence. He has Himself borne through Catholic cities with the due honor which faith loves to bestow, with surpliced priest, and canopy, and torches, and the tinkling bell that warns wayfarers to their knees. He is borne by missionaries through African forests to find a lodging for a faithful though savage breast; or over Canadian snows for days to bring a foretaste of heaven to a lumberman in a rude shanty. Or, to come nearer home, you may meet at times a priest coming through the streets of one of our cities. He is unheralded and unattended, and for those who are not of the household of the faith, he bears no sign of his mission. The Catholic misses at first the quick smile and the kindly greeting; but, as he glances at the quiet recollected face of the priest, he discerns the truth—the Master and His disciple are wending their way together on a special errand of mercy. The ninety and nine can wait; there is one whose need

is urgent. Quickly they pass, the priest and the Lord Jesus. Their way may lead to the mansion of the great or to the tenement of the poor; it matters not to them; they think only of a soul that needs their help. The things of earth are all of little moment now. When He enters, whether it be a magnificent chamber or a miserable back room in an attic, His presence makes of it the Tabernacle of the Most High and the vestibule of heaven.

Pausing at the door, the priest utters the blessing prescribed by our Lord when He sent the seventy, two by two, on their mission: "Peace be to this house," he says, "and to all that dwell therein." With as few words as may be, he enters the sick-chamber, where all is prepared for the Guest he brings. If, in these less-favored times, we cannot bring our Lord along the streets with those external marks of honor which faith would fain bestow, surely in the sanctuary of a Catholic home, no matter how poor it may be, we can offer Him His proper meed of reverence. The sick-chamber is neat and clean. A table is ready, covered with white linen, and on it are a crucifix between two candles, a white Communion cloth, holy water, and fresh water with a spoon for the purification of the priest's fingers.

The priest spreads the corporal on the table and places his sacred Burden thereon, adoring on bended knee. He sprinkles the holy water, using the same prayers that the Church prescribes for the *Asperges* in the Sunday Mass. The confession of the sick person is heard, if necessary; the *Confiteor* is said, and the hoped-for-moment of blissful Communion is at hand. If the sick person be not in danger of death, the Communion is administered with the same form of words as is used in church. In such case the communicant should be fasting. However, our present Holy Father has granted permission to bring holy Communion to the sick who are not in danger of death, even when they cannot remain fasting, the conditions being that they have been ill for a month, without hope of speedy recovery, and that the food taken be in liquid form.

But those on whom Death has set his seal, those whose pilgrimage seems hastening to a close, before whom the gates of eternity are opening wide, such as these the Church, reflecting the loving kindness of her Lord, has always dispensed from the obligation of fasting. The Communion of such is called by a special name, a beautiful and suggestive name—*Viaticum*. Of old "viaticum" meant some form of sustenance or aid which should keep a traveler

till his journey's end. "Courage, poor weary wayfarer," says the Church, as she offers him this all-sufficient *Viaticum*. "Here is One who has trod the way thou treadest, and has beaten a path with His wounded feet; here is One who has paid thy fare and toll with His Blood; here is Food that shall sustain thee, a Guide who shall accompany thee, a Friend who shall protect thee, nay, the very King of the land to which thou farest, disguising Himself now to be with thee on the road, only to enjoy thy glad surprise when He shall reveal Himself in glory in His Kingdom.

"Abide with us, O Lord, for the night draweth on. Ere I wend forth on the unknown road that would be so fearful and so lonely but for Thee, may my heart be gladdened by the voice of Thy priest, as he says: 'Receive, my brother, the *Viaticum* of the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may preserve thee from the wicked foe, and bring thee to life everlasting. Amen.'"

XLIII. PENANCE

BY THE REV. WILLIAM GRAHAM

"Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven," etc.—John xx, 22.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Forgiveness of sin, main problem of religion. Difficulties it encounters solved in Christ, dying in atonement for it. Provision made for forgiveness in two Sacraments, Baptism and Penance. Deal here with Penance, given for remission of post-baptismal sin.

I. (a) What this Sacrament effects. Rekindles sparks of Divine life in souls, supernaturally dead. Engrafts withered branch on living vine, etc. To possess the power of effecting these marvels, glory of Catholic Church. (b) Ritual of this Sacrament. Has grown up from elements ever the same, though method of application has varied. These essential elements are absolution on part of priest, and dispositions of sorrow, confession and satisfaction on part of penitent. (c) Absolution, set form of words used by priest, essential to effectiveness of Sacrament. In form is absolute, though precatory, equivalent to absolution, at one time in use. The power implied in absolution is inherent in the priesthood, imparted fundamentally in ordination, but limited in exercise, to sphere of jurisdiction. This power real, though ministerial; no mere prayer for, or declaration of, God's pardon. All bound to submit grievous sins to "power of Keys," even when pardon is obtained through perfect contrition.

II. The function of the penitent in confession is to furnish matter for the Sacrament. (a) By true sorrow, necesary for forgiveness of sin, in all dispensations. His repentance or turning from sin to God, must be supernatural in motive and source internal, its seat is in the heart. Supreme as sin is supreme evil. Must include some degree of the love of God; when grounded on pure unselfish love of God, is perfect; on less worthy and more selfish grounds, such as fear of hell, loss of heaven, etc., imperfect, or attrition. (b) Confession or disclorure of sin. Inseparable from sacramental rite, instituted as a legal trial, or testing of sinner's fitness for absolution. Its qualities. (c) Satisfaction remains to be offered, even when guilt and eternal punishment remitted. Involves restitution, fulfilment of penance, and life of self-denial.

Introduction.—The problem facing all religions, is forgiveness of sin. How is a guilt-stained soul to be restored to grace, and the godless and graceless sinner to be reconciled to an offended Diety? The story of the prodigal is the history of religion. Can man atone for sin, and if so, how? It is easy to say, by repentance; but even if it were feasible, or possible to all, repentance can never make adequate atonement to the outraged Majesty of the Most High. It ever falls infinitely short of the offense. And yet, all nations and all forms of religion have believed in pardon, and have framed rites and sacrifices for appeasing the wrath of an angry God.

But there is a difficulty herein. How can God, essentially moral and just, the avenger of outraged law—who has Himself riveted sin and doom, crime and the punishment of crime, together—pardon sin? How, in a world ruled by cause and effect, by fixed law; in short, can He, consistently with his attributes, reverse this law and forgive sin on such mild and easy terms as men usually think? The answer is, *"Christ,"* the universal belief or tradition of a Redeemer and Saviour, or the equivalent of one. God became man, and made our burden His. He made, by the sufferings endured in His human nature, ample atonement for the race, "Him that knew no sin, God made sin, on our behalf." The Divine image broken and maimed by sin, is restored in, and through, Christ the divine ideal and Saviour of humanity. Were the Incarnation not a fact, we should have to invent it. But in truth, all nations have had traditions—lingering remnants of early revelation—of God, or gods, assuming human form, to raise up fallen man. But how are the fruits of redemption applied to the cleansing of our souls from sin? It is the glory of the Catholic Church to have been intrusted by her divine Founder with the great power of forgiving sins in and through the application of the Blood and consequent merits of Christ, stored up in the two great Sacraments of Baptism and Penance, the former for ante-baptismal, the latter for post-baptismal, sin. In these two Sacraments Christ "washes us from our sins in His own Blood" (Apoc. i, 5). The prophecies of old are realized in the Church to-day, "The people that dwell therein shall have their iniquity taken away from them" (Isaias xxxiii, 24). "There shall be a fountain open to Jerusalem for the washing of the sinner and the unclean" (Zach. xiii, 1).

Taking into account the strength of man's animal nature, and the weakness of his spiritual, sin is almost a necessity. At all events, baptismal innocence is extremely rare, and hence God, in His mercy, has set up a means of coping with the gigantic evil of post-baptismal sin, in the Sacrament of Penance, the subject of our discourse to-day.

I. In this Sacrament the spark of Divine grace lost by sin is rekindled, the dead soul is restored to life, the dead branch again engrafted on the living vine, the discordant note of a sinful life is brought again into tune with the Divine, and the sinner enabled to say once more, as when first robed in grace, "I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me."

In its outward or liturgical aspect, the administration of the Sacrament of Penance has varied considerably, though inwardly and in essentials ever the same, viz., the absolving power of the Church, exercised through her priests, over the "contrite and penitent heart" of man, that has come "confessing his sins."

Penance is called "the court of conscience," as having been always dispensed in the form of a trial at law, wherein the priest is the judge and assessor, and the penitent, both criminal and accuser, bearing witness against himself by telling his own sins. According to the Roman rite, the trial is held in *confessionals*, placed in the open church, and seen by all, with a grating or veil between priest and penitent. The separation between priest and penitent dates only from the sixteenth century; and a long period elapsed ere it became general. Even now it is not insisted on in the case of men. Previously confessions were made publicly or privately, kneeling before the priest, or, as is the practise in the Greek Church to-day, seated at his side. Secret confession is now the rule. In early times confession was also public and general, a trace of which is seen in the "Confiteor," or general confession, with which the Sacramental rite now begins. The present liturgical form for administering the Sacrament of Penance is the outcome and growth of custom and legislation as in the case of Baptism and holy Mass.

As was observed, however, the essential elements were always identical, viz., absolution on the part of the priest, acting by way of form on the matter furnished by the penitent, contrition in the heart, confession on the lips, and satisfaction in work.

The function of the priest in Penance is absolution, by the utterance of words constituting the form of the Sacrament. They are essential to its validity or effectiveness, as much so as are the words of Consecration, in holy Mass, to the Eucharist. Without them there is no Sacrament. The essential words are: "I absolve thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The full form is longer, containing, in addition, a prayer for mercy on the sinner and a continuance of the fruits of the Sacred Passion in his soul. The words of absolution are judicial or absolute. At one time a precatory form, as now in the East, was used also in the Western Church, but equivalent to absolute. It implies such a prayer as "May God absolve thee through My ministry."

This power of loosing from sin by a judicial form of words is

inherent in priests and bishops, granted fundamentally in ordination, but limited in exercise to the sphere of their jurisdiction. Each judge in the civil courts has his circuit, wherein alone he can try cases, and so in the court of conscience, in the kingdom of God. At one period bishops alone, or in union with their clergy, gave absolution; now, as a rule, it is exercised by individual priests within the range of their license, or faculties, as they are called. For grave reasons certain grosser forms of sin may be reserved to the Pope or bishops; yet, this reservation ceases in pressing cases where there is danger of death. All sins, howsoever numerous or grave, come under the power of the Keys. Final impenitence alone is outside the range of the absolving power of the Church. She admits no limitation. "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made whiter than snow."

Though the priest's function in absolution is ministerial, *i. e.,* discharged in the name of Christ, it is none the less real. It is as judicial an act as that of a civil magistrate who condemns or liberates criminals in the name and by the authority of the crown. Absolution is no mere declaration of pardon, or a prayer that God may pardon. The priest's power comes direct from Christ, and is the usual channel through which the stream of grace and mercy flows. The priest shares not only the priestly and prophetic offices of Christ, but also His judicial. This is the meaning ever attached to the words of Christ, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained," as may be seen by reference to any book of controversy on the subject.

As we shall see, forgiveness of sin may be secured by perfect sorrow, but this must include the intention of receiving the Sacrament. It implies the wish of adopting the means formulated by Christ for the judicial pardon of sin, thus *virtually* including the same thing.

Absolution requires the actual presence of the penitent; hence, absolution by letter, telephone, or telegraph is invalid and certainly unlawful.

The work or function of the penitent, as I said, is to furnish the matter of the Sacrament. This is effected by complying with the three conditions of *Contrition, Confession,* and *Satisfaction.* The two latter, in cases of imminent danger of death or unconsciousness, may be postponed or dispensed with; Contrition *never.* It is the life, soul, and essence of the Sacrament on the part of the penitent.

Forgiveness of sin hinges on it; and without at least a certain degree of it, called attrition, pardon cannot be had, even in the Sacrament. Till Christ came, perfect sorrow for sin, through the future merits of Christ, was, and still is outside the Church, the sole plank of refuge for souls shipwrecked by sin. Not that the Sacrament has suspended sorrow or dispensed with it, for it is still embodied therein as an essential part; but it has made the virtue of penance easier, safer, surer and more within reach. Contrition is a heartfelt sorrow for sin. It necessarily implies grief for past sin joined to a firm purpose to avoid it in future. True sorrow is a turning from sin back again to God. Hence, it is called repentance, and involves many elements: illumination, to realize the evil of sin; grief, for falling into it; desire of forgiveness, by recourse to prescribed means; trust or confidence in God, "Who wills not the death of the sinner but that he be converted and live." The main seat of this repentance is the heart, a synonym for the will. "Rend your hearts and not your garments and turn to the Lord your God" (Joel ii, 12). "Cast away from you all your transgressions by which you have transgressed, and make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit." It is only "a broken and contrite heart that God shall not despise." Whatsoever be its accompanying signs or ritual, sorrow, repentance, deep inward regret for offending God, has ever been the life and soul of "the forgiveness of sins" in all dispensations. Indeed, repentance is the first duty of a creature. It is the only form of atonement a creature can offer, and one that God rigorously exacts. The Blood of Christ avails not without it; for a creature cannot turn to God by love, and away from Him by sin, at one and the same time.

To be effectual, either in or out of the Sacrament, this sorrow must be based on some supernatural motive; *i. e.,* a motive suggested by light or faith, and springing from an impulse of Divine grace. It must be *inward* and *heartfelt, i. e.,* in will, the seat of sin; and also *universal,* in the sense that our sorrow should take in at least all our grievous sins. Then, too, it must be *supreme* or *sovereign, i. e.,* greater than for other evils. We must deem sin the greatest of all evils, and be prepared, with God's grace, to do anything, rather than fall into it. Loveless sorrow will not purchase pardon. Some degree of the love of God must be an element in our contrition. If this contrition rests on the pure unselfish love of God, it is *perfect.* Holy, unadulterated sorrow like this casts out sin as

light darkness. Such was the sorrow of Magdalen, who was forgiven much, because she *loved* much. Perfect contrition justifies, restores to grace, without the Sacrament. There merely remains the obligation implied in our Lord's words to the lepers whom He miraculously cleansed, "Go, show yourselves to the priests," to get judicial pardon. If our love in contrition is based on selfish motives, the fear we feel of losing heaven, and of deserving hell, it is called *imperfect,* or *attrition,* it justifies only in, and through, the grace of the Sacrament. Fear is not a perfect motive; it is, however, *good,* and does not, by any means, exclude initial love. Indeed, fear is "the beginning of Wisdom." For the majority of men, self-centered and unspiritual by nature, attrition is all we can expect, though all are exhorted to arouse, and ought to pray for, pure unselfish love of God in their sorrow, rather than the selfish, though wholesome, fear of Him.

The second condition of pardon, on the part of the penitent, in the Sacrament, is confession. By the very nature of the sacramental rite, as a sort of process at law or trial, self-manifestation, or rather accusation, is absolutely necessary. Confession of some sort, open or secret, logically follows from the power of "forgiving sins," Christ's legacy to His Church. If, by our Lord's words (John xx, 23), priests are judges, to *forgive* sins, by absolving the worthy; or *retain* them, by refusing pardon to the unworthy, how can they exercise this ministry unless the penitent himself make known the state of his conscience. The very duties of the confessor as judge, adviser and physician involve a sincere and candid confession. Clients have to explain the state of their business and maladies to their doctors and lawyers, or suffer. Disclosure of sin has ever been practised in connection with the Sacrament of Penance. The forgiveness of sins was not meant to be granted at random, or by caprice, but on due investigation, through confession. Moreover, God alone could impose such a precept and be obeyed. The telling of one's sins is certainly no human addition to the Sacrament, but a necessary and primitive part.

Nor is this laying bare the wounds of the soul so very unreasonable as people say. It is a need of the heart; intimate friends do so for mutual help and consolation every day, and if we do not have recourse to spiritual guides that are trained, sympathetic, experienced, and rigorously bound to secrecy, there is danger of resorting to those who are just the opposite. There is quackery in religion,

as in medicine. Indeed, to certain souls and in certain frames of mind, open avowal of sin, confession in short, is a safety-valve To all souls, confession is consoling, penitential, and instructive,

Public confession of sin came to an end in the fourth century. Private confession has been the rule ever since. The ritual forms bearing on confession have varied, but the practise of disclosure of sin, in some form or other is, and ever has been, constant and essential. To speak of confessing one's sins to God alone, nullifies the sacramental rite. If a man is appointed to pronounce judgment, he must know the case.

The qualities of a good confession are, in the first place, that it should be *humble.* It is the avowal of repeated acts of revolt and treachery against the King of kings; and, like the repentant prodigal and humble publican, we should both in word and feeling avow in all modesty and humility our guilt. Next, it should be *simple, i. e.,* limited to a truthful statement of our misdeeds, without excuses on one side or exaggeration on the other. Again, our confession should be *sincere,* telling our sins as they are—mortal, venial, certain or doubtful—laying bare, in fact, our guilt, as we candidly think it to be in the sight of almighty God. Lastly, our confessions should be *entire* and complete; *i. e.,* an honest declaration of all our grievous sins, with any attending circumstances that may change the nature of the sin. Wilfully to conceal a sin in confession is to lie to the Holy Ghost and commit a sacrilege.

The third condition required on the part of the penitent is *Satisfaction.* It is accepting humbly, and carrying out exactly, the penance imposed by the priest. The ways of sin are hard. The path to heaven, even in case of the innocent and God-fearing, is not strewn with flowers. If the saints do not escape punishment for slight faults, how can sinners hope to escape chastisement for gross excesses. Sin and punishment are inseparable. There is, in consequence, a certain note of danger to shallow souls, in the easy terms on which pardon for sin is offered. Hence, the Church preaches the need of penance, and has embodied temporal satisfaction for sins as an integral part of the Sacrament. She wisely, therefore, insists on reminding us by the imposition of a penance, that the Sacrament is not altogether a wiping the slate of guilt clean. The guilt and eternal doom awaiting mortal sin are erased by the infinite merits of Christ; but a heavy debt of punishment remains to be undergone ere we can be said to "pay the last farthing." In former times, sacramental penances were

extremely severe; now, to a great extent, they are merely nominal. Such as they are, however, in the way of prayer, fasting, or almsdeeds, they are to be discharged personally, and exactly, inasmuch as they form an integral, though not an essential, part of the Sacrament. They thus acquire a sacramental character and value, raising them above their intrinsic worth. Needless to say, that reparation for the wrong done to the property or character of others by sin must form part of the satisfaction to be paid by us for the forgiveness of these sins. Neither must we forget that over and above the atoning merits of Christ we must in person suffer temporally for our sins. Suffering or, rather, punishment and sin, go together; and if the sinner is to be saved at all, even by repentance, this temporal satisfaction must be fully carried out on earth or in purgatory. If not on earth, "He shall be saved yet so as by fire" (I. Cor. iii, 5).

Thus, purgatory awaits those who fail to pay their debt of penance on earth. It is not in vain, therefore, that we are recommended to "do penance, lest we all likewise perish." "To take up our cross and follow Christ." "To do good whilst we have the day." We all owe much and must "pay to the uttermost farthing." Hence the need of seeing to that branch of a sacramental confession, rightly named "Satisfaction."

But, to reap the full fruits of the Sacrament of Penance, we must duly prepare. No seeds will grow well in wild, untilled soil. Pure air, light, and warmth will not enter a room hermetically sealed against them. We must, therefore, prepare the soil of the heart for this holy rite. We must ventilate our souls, so as to let in God's light and air in holy grace. The preparation for confession, prayer for light, examination of conscience, rousing ourselves by reflection and aspiration, go a long way toward the worthy reception of this Sacrament. "We reap what we sow," herein as in everything else. If we approach the holy tribunal in proper dispositions, then, and then only, can we hope to hear Christ's words sound in our ears, "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee."

The hall-mark of a good Catholic is going regularly to confession. We may measure his fidelity and loyalty to duty by the frequency wherewith he avails himself of this holy rite, for who is there that does not need, and frequently, too, "the forgiveness of sin."

XLIV. EXTREME UNCTION

BY THE REV. WILLIAM GRAHAM

"Is any one sick among you, let him bring in the priests of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." —James v, 14.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Main purpose of life is getting ready for a holy death. The last conscious moments on earth seal our fate forever. Hence, importance of final sacramental help to dying well. Extreme Unction, one of the last Sacraments. How consoling to surviving friends, and full of promise to recipient, the words "Died fortified by the rites of Holy Church." Let us dwell: I. On what Extreme Unction is; II. Its nature; III. Its effects.

I. Meaning of Sacramental rite of Extreme Unction. Administered by priest or priests. Given only to dying sick. Once only in same spell of illness. Preparation of soul by contrition or confession; place. Ceremonies used. Five great avenues of sense, and reins or loins anointed. These often seat and instruments of sin.

II. Extreme Unction a sacramental rite, not a mere faith-healing rite. Healing by prayer and imposition of hands quite a distinct gift in early Church. Words of St. James and constant teaching and practise of and practise of Church decisive of point. The three essential elements of Church decisive of point. The three essential elements of a Sacrament: Outward sign, inward grace, and Divine institution implied in the text from St. James (v. 14, 15).

III. Effects illustrated by properties of matter of Sacrament, olive oil. (a) Is medicinal, nourishing and invigorating. Indispensable in lands where olive grows. Sanctified by solemn blessing on Holy Thursday, and embodied in Sacrament produces similar effects spiritually. How? (b) Olive oil is an illuminant. Feeds the lamp of the Sanctuary, is sole resource to many when light of day yields to darkness. So, spiritually, grace of holy unction sheds light on darkened soul. (c) Again, oil is a lubricant; smoothes rough, hard surfaces. Is a needful aid to function in body and all forms of machinery. Like effects spiritually, in Extreme Unction.

Conclusion.—Exhort to early and careful reception of this Sacrament on learning that we are "Sick unto death."

Introduction.—To die well is even more important than to live well. We may safely say, however, that a holy death is the crown and sequence of a holy life. Aids to holy living are, therefore, also aids to holy dying; but, as an eternity of weal or wo hinges on death, we shall limit our attention to-day to the latter, rather than the former. "What will it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul"; or, even if such were possible, to live a saint and die a reprobate. Christ, knowing this, left us a mystic

rite, a Sacrament, the complement of Penance, as Confirmation is of Baptism, to help us to die well. This is Extreme Unction, the rite meant to be the last specially effective aid a soul can receive in its dying struggle with satan and sin. The various currents of thought, desire, and action that go to weave the tangled web of life, converge in the last solemn moment of death to determine our fate forever. By holy unction and prayer, the Church does her best to aid the souls of her children as they go forth to meet their Judge. She thereby proclaims that man is no mere animated clay, no mere beast or bird, returning to the infinite void, whence life sprang; but an immortal spirit, destined to live forever, and meet again this perishable body, its partner, itself a sacred thing, consecrated to God in Baptism and Confirmation, and now finally anointed and solemnly offered once more to God in Extreme Unction. Just as the soul is about to wing its flight from earth, the body that enshrined it, ere being committed to the dust it came from, is declared by prayer and unction, "sacred to the Lord," given over to his keeping, till the last dread trump of doom calls it to rise again. Nothing paints more vividly, save, perhaps, a funeral, how vain and fleeting, and hollow, are all earthly things; or rivets our attention more forcibly on the reality and worth of eternal, than to witness the administration of the last holy rites. What consolation to surviving friends lies in the words, "Died, fortified by the rites of holy Church." Let us now dwell briefly: I. On what the rites and ceremonies of Extreme Unction are; II. their nature; III. their effects.

I. Needless to remind you that by the Sacrament of Extreme Unction is meant the anointing of the sick, in danger of death, with holy oils, accompanied by a set form of words used prayerfully. The minister of this rite is a priest, *presbyter*. In ancient times several priests took part in it, though one was deemed sufficient, as is the practise to-day. In the Greek Church, the sick are usually anointed by seven, or at least three. Extreme Unction is not now administered before the holy Viaticum, or last Communion, though formerly it was the reverse. It is given only to those "sick unto death" once baptized, with the remains of post-baptismal sin on their souls. Hence, infants, the insane, who never enjoyed the full use of reason, criminals condemned to death, or soldiers going into battle, are not anointed, even with almost certain death in view.

It is administered only once in the same spell of illness. Should

a change occur in a chronic malady, or in case of relapse after whole or partial recovery, it may be readministered. There were times and places, however, wherein the rite was imparted on several consecutive days.

Though not absolutely necessary for salvation, Extreme Unction cannot without great risk be disregarded, much less despised. Owing, indeed, to the special perils and needs attending our last moments, it may, relatively speaking, be of supreme importance. Being a Sacrament of the *living, i. e.,* one wherein the state of grace is required as a condition of receiving worthily, it is usual, if not necessary, to make confession beforehand. Indeed, before the last unction and blessing, confession is usually made, and holy Communion by way of Viaticum received, by all good practical Catholics.

Care should be taken to have the sick-room prepared in such a way that the Sacrament may be administered with due reverence and respect. Not only soul and body should be clean, but the very place where it is received. A table covered with a white clean cloth, holy water, blessed candles, and crucifix, placed thereon, should be got ready for the occassion, as a sort of altar.

The ceremonies at present in use are probably familiar to you all. The priest, on entering, gives the sick person a crucifix to kiss, sprinkles him, as also the room and persons present, with holy water, commending all to God in appropriate prayers. The sufferer is exhorted, and if necessary, briefly instructed, in fitly chosen words, on the meaning of the rite about to be performed. The Confiteor or general confession is recited, and the bystanders urged to join in prayers for the sick and dying. Then the priest, using his thumb, anoints in the form of a cross with holy oils the five great avenues of sense, as also the hands, feet, and reins (latter mostly omitted), saying at each act of unction a prayer that God, in His tender mercy, may forgive the sins in the commission of which they were instrumental. In case of urgency, the rite may be shortened to one unction and form of prayer.

Thus, the body, too often, alas! the source and instrument of guilt, is restored to God's keeping, either to be healed, or rendered fit to be interred in consecrated ground, to await, as I said, its call to rejoin the soul for final judgment.

II. That this last anointing of the dying sick is a sacramental rite and not a mere faith-healing and ceremonious one, is the constant teaching and tradition of the Church from apostolic times.

There is no period when it was not held as one of the seven great symbolic acts conveying inward grace. The words of St. James, written less than thirty years after the Resurrection, point to the acceptance of this rite as one generally received and practised in the early Church: "Is anyone sick among you, let him bring in the priests of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him" (St. James v, 14, 15). The teaching and practise of the Church on Extreme Unction are embedded in these words, properly explained and understood.

Oil, no doubt, was, and still is, used in the healing art; but that the Apostle meant its use symbolically and sacramentally is shown from his command to summon not the physician, but the presbyters or priests. The gift of healing, recognized in early Church, was quite a distinct thing, effected not by application of oil, but by the laying on of hands. The bodily cure resulting from the sacramental rite is secondary and accidental, not essential and primary. Its main purpose is the cure or healing of the soul: "If he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." Indeed, the three essential conditions of a Sacrament may be evolved from the Apostle's words. We have, first of all, the outward sign, in the application of oil solemnly blessed every year by the Bishop on Holy Thursday. This holy oil is the matter of the Sacrament. Whilst being applied, prayer is used, as St. James ordered. The set form used gives efficacy to the rite, and is called the form of the Sacrament, "By this holy unction and by His own most tender mercy may the Lord forgive thee whatever sin thou hast committed by sight," hearing, etc. The Apostle mentions the forgiveness of sin as a result of the anointing. This cannot take place without imparting inward grace, the third condition of a Sacrament. God alone can annex grace to a mere outward rite; and, therefore, the rite must have been divinely instituted. No human power could originate a Sacrament. St. James, called "the brother" of the Lord, promulgates the rite of Extreme Unction not as an absolutely new thing, but as emphasizing the advantages of a practise already in use. Even before our Lord's death, it would seem to have been practised by the Apostles: "They (the Apostles) . . . anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them" (Mark vi, 2).

III. Just as we can study the cleansing effects of Baptism in the

very matter of the sacramental rite—water—so can we trace the effects of Extreme Unction in the properties of the matter employed in administering it.

(*a*) Oil, the juice of the olive, strengthens and invigorates. In many countries it is an all-important element of diet and medicine. It both feeds and cures. What would the sunny South do without its olive gardens, the source of its oil?

Friction with oil prepares the body for the fray; hence, gladiators and other athletes were anointed by way of preparation for battle and possible death. The Church, too, has her fountains of oil that never run dry. She has children, "sick unto death," to heal and strengthen; she, too, has warriors and athletes to anoint for the fray. This she effects with the oil of Extreme Unction, wherewith she anoints her dying Christian athletes in their last great struggles with the forces of evil. The conflict that makes life a warfare culminates in the soul, at the hour of death, just at the moment when the poor weary spirit is least able to stand up in deadly fight. Its powers of resistance are enfeebled under pain, with the accompanying weakness and depression that pain causes. Past sins come up in memory, to fill us with terror, doubt, or despair. The great adversary of good concentrates his myriad forces to snatch from God, by a supreme effort, the fruits of redemption.

It is in this last struggle that the special graces attached to holy unction come into play. This "oil of the strong" aids the poor sufferer in an otherwise hopeless struggle. The powers of the soul are braced up and stimulated to exertion in this fateful moment. As the soul's strength is diminished or exhausted by the body's weakness, physical pain is often relieved; and, as most priests on active duty can testify, health is frequently restored either totally or partially, to help the recipient eventually to die well. The holy oil, thus applied with prayer, is endowed with sacramental power to heal the sick in body and in soul. It is a potent drug in the hands of the heavenly Physician, to comfort, strengthen, and pardon. It penetrates even to the "division of soul and spirit," for its main purpose and chief effect is to cure the soul of the remnants of sin. "The prayer of faith," uttered when applying it, "will heal the sick, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." Though not primarily like penance, yet indirectly and secondarily it remits venial sin and also mortal sin in cases where confession cannot be made, thus restoring to spiritual life. Then, it is all powerful

against what are called the remnants of sin, minor effects, weakness and weariness of soul, undue trouble and anxiety, evil inclinations, disrelish for spiritual things. There are traces, scars, wounds and the rest, latent in the soul, all of them obstacles to a happy death, broken down and removed by this divine medicine of the soul.

(*b*) Another property of oil is to give light. It has fed the lamp of the sanctuary for ages. In many places oil is still the sole illuminant. When the light of day ceases, its dim but kindly light is our only resource in the encircling gloom.

So, too, when our sun is setting, and the light of life gradually fading away, a mysterious darkness often creeps over the soul, the mind seems to lose its grasp on the great eternal truths, doubt, unbelief, weakening of faith, cloud the soul, "the powers of darkness" thus gaining boldness and strength. It is then that the consolations of religion come to our aid, and the mystic oil of unction becomes "a lamp to our feet." The soft divine light of grace it brings dispels the gloom fast gathering over the soul. Grace acts as light. It is only a metaphor, but it helps us to understand how the holy oil of unction both fortifies and illumines us on our way to the "realms of light" beyond the grave.

(*c*) A third effect of oil is to smooth rough surfaces. It softens, soothes and cleanses. It is a powerful lubricant. The joints of living bodies, as well as the various parts of complicated machinery, are only kept fit for function by the effect of oil or its equivalent. "To cast oil on troubled waters" is true in more senses than one.

The same results are sacramentally and mystically produced by the holy oil of unction on those "sick unto death." To soften and calm their troubled souls, to ease the trying strain of mind, and will, and conscience, the Church reserves this soothing remedy for her dying children. She blesses in solemn pomp and ceremony the oil destined for the last rites, carefully reserves it in her sanctuaries, close to her tabernacles, and reverently carries it to the home of her dying children, to be a comfort and a solace in their last moments. The outward sign of prayer and action effects an inward change that only the experienced can verify. Its sedative effect is often visible to the doctor of the body, as well as to the physician of the soul. The holy oil of unction calms and soothes the dying athlete, imparting courage, resignation and comfort to hearts wherein fear, doubt and anxiety struggled before for the mastery.

Fear not, therefore, when warned of approaching death, to receive

the last rites of holy Church. Defer not their reception till the last gasp, or loss of consciousness, when, perhaps, you are unfitted to benefit by them to their full extent.

Warn your confessor, and doctor, and family not to delay too long, to inform you of your danger. After all, the art of arts is that of dying well. To live well is only of value as an aid to dying well. The highest form of works of mercy, therefore, is visiting the sick and aiding them to die well, securing, if possible, their reception of the last Sacraments, holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction. To a Christian, death is the gate of life. See then that you make provision for your last journey. Holy Mother Church furnishes us with bread and oil in starting. In her sanctuaries, as I observed, she reserves the holy bread of the Eucharist for our Viaticum, and the holy oils for our unction. Matter for these holy rites never fails. Christ said to the Church, we may say, as Elias to the widow of Sarepta: "Fear not . . . the pot of meal shall not waste, nor the cruse of oil be diminished" (III. Kings xvii, 14). They are a main part of the Church's treasure. Let us make provision for receiving them, so that when the last summons comes, we may be fortified in hearing the dread announcement, "Render an account of thy stewardship, for now thou canst be steward no longer." They only need dread them who refuse, or wilfully fail, to die "fortified by the rites of holy Church."

XLV. HOLY ORDERS

BY THE REV. WILLIAM GRAHAM

"Stir up the grace which is in thee by the imposition of my hands."—II. Tim. i, 6.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Analogy between Holy Orders and Marriage. Both carry on the Kingdom of God. All grades or steps in Holy Orders cluster round the priesthood as their common aim and center.

I. Priest and sacrifice correlative terms. Sacrifice at all times, the main function of public worship. Body of men set apart to offer sacrifice. Holy Mass, sole surviving sacrifice, pleasing to God. Embodies what was best and highest in all other forms of this rite. Requires priesthood—the outcome of Holy Orders.

Without a priesthood, the world a spiritual desert. Where true altar and priesthood abolished, replaced by a table and a ministery. The craving for an offering and a true priesthood to offer, ever remains. Mere inward sacrifices in the way of prayer and self-denial insufficient.

Great aim of Church, to retain, provide, and reform if needful, her clergy. "Ye are the salt of the earth," she says to them with Christ. Chosen men, physically, morally and intellectually fit for the great work of offering the adorable Sacrifice of Holy Mass.

Young Levite, who celebrates Mass for first time, has been long and carefully prepared for the sacred functions of his ministry.

II. After admittance into clerical state, by ceremony of Tonsure, he has mounted the altar by a ladder of seven steps, the four minor and three major orders making up the Sacrament in its integrity. All seven bear on the great Eucharistic Sacrifice. Complete in priesthood.

Therein he receives two main powers: (a) the power of consecrating, and (b) that of absolving; other powers also.

Episcopacy is extension of priesthood; functions.

Christ present in His Church in a hidden manner, under Eucharistic veils, visibly, in his priesthood. In their person, He is ever "going about doing good," discharging through them His triple office of King, Priest and Prophet. How?

Introduction.—Holy Orders and Matrimony come last in the list of sacramental rites, yet it is they that carry on the Kingdom of God. The fecundity of holy wedlock gives to the Church her faithful people; that of Holy Orders her devoted clergy. There is a striking analogy between them; as under God, they are both springs of life, one in the natural, the other in the spiritual, order. Both are fenced in, guarded, and sanctified by holy continency. Strict conjugal fidelity and rigid marital purity are to the spouse what holy and spotless chastity are in the priest. Both states imply and connote sacrifice. Of Holy Orders we speak to-day. (No more appropriate occasion can offer to speak on this subject than the

present, when a young Levite, fresh from its sacred rites, offers up with consecrated hands for the first time in holy Mass the spotless Victim of Calvary.) The terms, priest and sacrifice, are inseparable. For, though "the law maketh men priests who have infirmity" (Heb. vii, 28), yet, "Every high priest taken from among men is ordained . . . that he may offer gifts and sacrifices" (*Ibid.* v, 1). Priest and sacrifice are thus correlative terms, like king and kingdom, husband and wife. The Sacrament of Holy Orders, in all its steps, implies sacrifice or the discharge of some function bearing on sacrifice. To form sacrificing priests, therefore, was Christ's purpose in the institution of this Sacrament. The episcopate is but an extension of the priesthood, conveying the power of propagating, or carrying down, the priestly office; the lower orders are but grades of the priestly office, or, rather, steps leading to it.

To understand thoroughly the Sacrament of Holy Orders, given for the perpetuation of the priesthood, we must grasp well the idea of sacrifice, the main function of the priest. His office is to stand between the people and God, "offering gifts and sacrifice." There is a sense, no doubt, in which all Christians, just as formerly all Jews, were said to be priests, offering up the great inward sacrifice of prayer, and praise, and self-surrender to almighty God; but this does not touch the question of the outward, public, visible worship, that men, as a body, felt ever bound to offer to God. Now, the main, central and highest form of this public cult has always been some kind of sacrifice. All religions, true or false, offered sacrifice, and gradually there grew up amongst them a body of men set apart to offer it. It is the abuse, not the use, of sacrifice we condemn, both in Jew and Gentile. Of course, the inward worship of the heart is ever binding; but this only accentuates the need of outward, joint worship on the part of society at large, ever expressing itself in offering, *i. e., sacrificing,* some outward thing, fruits, flowers or animals. These offerings were consumed or destroyed, or equivalently so, in order to bear witness to God's supreme dominion over all things. Live victims were slain, to show that God was master of life and death. The offering was ever made to God, or some one reputed as such. Hence, sacrifice is the *highest* form of religious rite, and differs essentially from other and secondary acts of Divine worship. It cannot, without *idolatry,* be offered to a creature. To make this offering duly and worthily, a priesthood has been established. With us, this is done by the sacramental rite of Holy Orders.

A priest is not one merely chosen to read public prayers, or preach, or take a leading part in local good works. No sacramental symbol is required to enable a man to discharge these offices. The main function of the priest is to sacrifice; and, in the new law, to absolve from sin. Divine service is not necessarily Divine sacrifice. The rite of sacrifice, as essential, indeed, the main central act of worship, can never perish from the earth, nor a priesthood to offer it. Forms, rites and ceremonies may change—not the priestly offering. The abrogation of the sacrifices of the old law was only the introduction of the one majestic sacrifice of the new, still carried on in the Mass, and offered daily by the new priesthood "from the rising to the setting sun." There is, and was, only one sacrifice worthy of God, and adequate to atone for sin—that of Christ on Calvary. That one sacrifice is still offered in an unbloody manner in the Mass by the visible priesthood, representing and sharing in the power of our one invisible High Priest, Christ. Mystic powers are conveyed in Holy Orders, the chief of which is the perpetuation of the sacrifice of the Cross, "Do this in commemoration of me." This command to sacrifice, *i. e.,* offer Christ's precious Body and Blood, the Church faithfully carries out through her priests. The Victim is the same, the priest the same, Jesus Christ, speaking through His priests, the manner only differs. The Mass is the Sun of Divine worship. It sums up in solemn splendor and spiritual beauty all other outward forms of sacrifice. We may say, in a reverent sense, that the old and the new law survive in the Mass. Nature, in the form of grape and wheat, all that men can bring in the way of art, and wealth, and taste, flowers, and music, and, on occasions, majestic rites, are embodied in the great Eucharistic Sacrifice of the Mass. All men's gifts to God circle round the altar, or are collected in the church, where holy Mass is offered by the priest, "first for his own sins, then for the people's" (Heb. vii, 27). The Mass is the one changeless Sacrifice of the Cross, offered up all the world over, for the quick and the dead.

For carrying on such a sacrifice a worthy priesthood must be provided, and this is effected by the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The priesthood of the old law came down by natural family descent from Aaron, the high priest; but the priesthood of the new law comes down from Christ in the powers transmitted through Holy Orders. Apostolicity, *i. e.,* the carrying on the mission, entrusted to the apostles by Christ, is a note of the true Church, resting on

the unbroken succession of her orders. Ordination, *i. e.*, Holy Orders, transmits the main features and powers of Christ. Now, "He was a priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedec," who offered, as you may remember, bread and wine, the matter of the Sacrifice of the Mass. "As my Father hath sent me, so I send you." This transmission of Divine authority exists in the priest. He is sent by the apostles, still living in the bishops, who still "ordain priests in every church" (Acts xix, 22), and thus continue "to give some apostles . . . some pastors . . . for the work of the ministry" (Eph. iv, 11), and see that none "assume this honor save those who are 'called by God as Aaron was'" (Heb. v, 4).

God works in us ministerially, in grace, as in nature. He sends His gifts, temporal and spiritual, through others. Priests are, in St. Paul's words "the dispensers of the mysteries of God." They thus guard and administer the channels of grace. We may say, therefore, with truth, that Holy Orders is the fountain of spiritual life in the Church. It is the source of all the streams of grace that water the garden of God. Without Holy Orders the world, spiritually, would be a wilderness. It would lie under perpetual interdict.

The city of God, alive to-day with the hum of prayer, and praise, and sacrifice, would be, without Holy Orders, like a city of the dead, as silent and lifeless as the grave. So pressing is the need of a priesthood, that where the churches are closed or desecrated, and the true priests slain or driven away, they get soon re-opened; and if the altar and true sacrifice are not restored, they are replaced by a table or reading-desk, and a sham clergy put in to take the place of real sacrificing priests. If men cease to worship the true God by the one true sacrifice, through the one true priesthood, they take to themselves false ones. Divine worship of some sort is a social need.

Hence, the devil's best weapon in his war with Christ is the removal or corruption of the clergy, the drying up, in fact, or poisoning, the wells of Holy Orders. All the great persecutors, from Nero downwards, have mainly aimed their death-blows at the heads of the clergy. "Scatter the shepherds, and the flocks will be dispersed," is their motto.

It was to His priests our Lord said: "Ye are the salt of the earth," adding, significantly, "What, if the salt be corrupted," meaning, that no greater curse or blight can fall on the Church than a corrupt

or faithless priesthood. Hence the anxiety, ever shown by her, for the training, selection and reforming of her clergy. Thank God, in spite of local and individual scandals, the Catholic priesthood has ever, as a whole, lived up to its ideal, and under all circumstances called mankind, both by preaching and example, to a lofty standard of truth and righteousness. Let slanderers say what they will, the proportion of bad or imperfect priests never exceeded, if it ever even came up to, that of those who were present with Christ Himself at the first Eucharistic banquet. Indeed, the Catholic priesthood has ever shown marked powers of self-recovery and readjustment to changed social and political conditions. It flourishes under and survives every régime. Whilst forms of government perish, never to rise again, one bad harvest, so to say, amongst the clergy, is followed, as in nature, by better ones. There is ever " a second spring" in progress somewhere amongst them. "Digitus Dei est hic," "The finger of God is here; and it is wonderful to our eyes."

The secret, in reality, lies in the mystic rite of Holy Orders, the Sacrament, "by which," to use the words of the Catechism, "priests and other ministers of the Church are ordained, and receive *power* and *grace* to perform their sacred duties."

The preparation required for this Sacrament and the ritual accompanying its bestowal are most searching and impressive. The young Levite who officiates before you to-day has had to undergo many long years of trial and training ere being deemed worthy to enter the priesthood. Before admission even as a candidate for Holy Orders, searching enquiries were made as to his fitness for the priesthood, physically, morally and intellectually. Though democratic in manning her clergy from every rank and class of the community, yet does the Church require fulness and integrity of life. The pure, spotless sacrifice demands this in those who represent "Christ our High Priest." Hence, to be blind, lame, deaf, or notably deformed physically, is a bar to orders. The same may be said of those morally and intellectually defective.

II. As a prelude to Holy Orders he received the tonsure, *i. e.*, his hair was cut in form of a crown, to denote his abandoning worldly dignities and pursuits, and entering the clerical state. Not that he is thereby cut off from the people, but merely reminded of his duty to be, in a special manner, a man of God. Pleasures, amusements, and pursuits permissible to the laity are forbidden to

one who thus dedicates himself exclusively to the service of God and His people.

After years of study and training he reached the summit of Holy Orders, the priesthood, by a ladder of seven steps, beginning with the four minor orders of *doorkeeper, lector, exorcist, acolyte,* and terminating with the three major orders of *subdiaconate, diaconate,* and *priesthood.* All these grades enable the recipients to discharge certain functions having a near or remote bearing on the great Eucharistic Sacrifice of the Mass. They are not separate Sacraments, but branches or parts of the one Sacrament of Orders. Indeed, it is questionable whether any but the priesthood and deaconate are fully sacramental at all. Each and all of these seven orders open up and suggest many interesting, historical and liturgical questions, but I limit my observations to the priesthood, the sun and center around which all revolve. All converge in preparing those who receive them to be "sacrificing priests."

Two great powers with corresponding grace to use them are conveyed in ordination; the first, over the real and natural body of Christ in *Consecration;* the second, over the mystical body of Christ, the Church, in *Absolution,* or the forgiveness of sin. The granting of these powers, inherent in the Sacrament, is accompanied by all the pomp, impressiveness and splendor to be found only in Catholic ritual. Each ceremony is a lesson and a prayer. The instruments of sacrifice and the Book of the Gospels, solemnly handed over with accompanying prayers, convey a solemn message to ear, and mind, and heart. The most impressive moment of all is the laying on of hands, with prayer, by the bishop, forming an essential element of the sacramental rite. The same tremendous power bestowed by Christ on the apostles of changing, in His name and person, bread and wine into His Body and Blood, is conferred on him. Christ has said to him, as to the apostles at the last supper, when He wished to perpetuate the gift of the Eucharist, "Do this in commemoration of me," viz., what He had done, when, "Taking bread, He gave thanks and brake; and gave to them, saying: 'This is my body, which is given for you.' . . . In like manner the chalice also, . . . saying, 'This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you'" (Luke xxii, 18, 19).

Moreover, he has received from the same source power of jurisdiction over the mystical body of Christ, in being qualified to take his seat in the tribunal of the Confessional, and act therein towards

the faithful as judge, doctor, and father. "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven," is Christ's commission to all priests for all time. He is now, in the words of St. Paul, "A minister of Christ and dispenser of the mysteries of God" (I. Cor. iv, 1).

Besides these two great powers of consecration and absolution, the priestly functions involve the administration of the Sacraments, except Holy Orders and Confirmation, the instruction of the people in faith and conduct, as well as consoling, visiting, and otherwise helping the sick and dying. It is his to bless, preach and rule in the name and power of his divine Master. But, as "everything must be done in order amongst us," the exercising of these powers and duties is subject to the bishop, "to whom it is given to rule the house of God."

The episcopate, it may be observed, is not a distinct order in itself, but the extension and plenitude of the priesthood. As successors of the apostles and rulers of the Church it is one of their main functions to administer the Sacrament of Holy Orders, thus perpetuating the priesthood and carrying on the kingdom of God. "They (the apostles, or first bishops) ordained priests in every church" (Acts xiv, 22). "I left thee," says St. Paul to Titus, whom he had consecrated bishop, "that thou shouldst ordain priests in every city" (Tit. i, 5). Their power to teach the faithful and the clergy, to guard morals and disciplines, and generally to legislate for and administer their dioceses, does not spring from Holy Orders, but is a sharing in the supreme jurisdiction granted to Peter, to whom is given main care of Christ's flock.

Neither bishop nor priest, be it observed, is a mere delegate or chosen representative of the community. Whatsoever the mode of election in times, present and past, the powers of the priesthood spring from their Orders. Ordination is not a *civil,* but *sacramental,* rite. It is of *Divine,* not *human,* institution. The grace comes from above, not from below. "Man imposes the hand," says St. Ambrose, "God gives the grace." The powers and essential privileges of the priesthood are the continuation and application of those of Christ.

Our Lord promised to be with His Church till the end of the world. He is present everywhere as God, and as man holds secret and silent court in the Blessed Sacrament. But He is therein immovable and invisible, revealing Himself only to the eye of faith. Further, however, He is *visibly* and *tangibly,* though *ministerially,* present in His priesthood. They reflect Him in their lives; they,

like Him, "go about doing good." Their mission is to mirror Christ to the people. He was, and is, king, priest and prophet; and their respective functions are discharged by Him not visibly, nor in person, but through the clergy, ministering to our spiritual needs in the pulpit, the confessional, and, above all, at the altar.

The royalty of Christ is shown in Church authority, from the Pope down to our own immediate pastors. His office as prophet comes home to us in the teaching office of holy Church, whilst His priesthood is daily exercised in our behalf in holy Mass.

It is significant that Holy Orders is one of the three Sacraments that impress an indelible seal or mark on the soul, called character. It implies a special consecration to almighty God, and is a reminder that the person thus sealed or marked should walk worthy of the character he bears, either as a *child,* a *soldier,* and, above all, a *priest,* of the true God. This hall-mark of the soul impressed in ordination is never lost. Once a priest, a priest forever, whether he tread in the footsteps of John and Augustine, or of Judas and Arius.

In the familiar sense of the term, character is the sum of qualities, good or bad, that combine to distinguish one person or thing from another. Life is the building up of character, the fixing of one's habits. Though free, yet we know that men will ever act up to their character or fixed ways. Amongst Christians, notwithstanding the endless diversity of character, there is one point in which all must meet—the imitation of Christ. For the Church, our Mother, is ever in labor, "till Christ be formed in us." The true priest, like the true Christian, is he who in life and character truly lives and reproduces his divine Master. The training, the schooling, the ideals of the priesthood, have all one end in view—the building up of Christ in the soul. Swerving from "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," in action or demeanor, seems a flaw in the sacerdotal character. It is a dimming and darkening of the hall-mark of ordination. Hence the outcry and gross exaggerations ever attending a scandal amongst the clergy. The very obloquy, criticism, and slander to which they are so unfairly exposed, spring from the perfection and height of their professed aims and ideals in "living Christ." The highest patterns of priestly life must, in the nature of things, fall infinitely short of this. Christ, the ideal man, like ideal beauty in art, is ever out of reach, ever receding to the skies, as we climb higher and higher the mountain of perfection; yet, He is the model, the one standard for all, but particularly for the priest. And, in-

deed, every true priest as he stands at the altar, sits in the confessional, or goes in search of the lost sheep, in the wild wastes of life, must feel it specially incumbent in him to follow the Master, even though painfully conscious of his manifold unworthiness.

Withal, the hostile world may be challenged to deny that any body of men ever imitated Christ better than the clergy, secular and regular, of the Catholic Church. History justifies their claim to be ever, in Christ's words, "the salt of the earth."

Pray, then, for the young Levite, who says his first Mass to-day, that the grace of Holy Orders planted in his soul may bear fruit abundantly, and ever aid him in his high and arduous office. Pray the Lord of the vineyard, that He may send laborers into His vineyard, men "powerful in work and word"; men with wills of steel, and hearts of gold, men of light and leading, trained like St. Paul, in the best of all schools, that of "Christ and Him crucified." Pray for him and all, remembering that they carry the great grace and responsibilities of Holy Orders, "in vessels of clay." And whilst availing yourselves of their ministrations in the great work of saving your souls, do not fail to thank God, "Who hath given such power to men."

XLVI. THE DIVINE OFFICE—THE PRIEST'S PRAYER

BY THE REV. G. LEE, C.S.SP.

"He that adoreth God with joy shall be accepted, and his prayer shall approach even to the clouds."—Eccles, xxxv, 20.

SYNOPSIS.—Life of the Church, in prayer; her work done through it. She prays much; her priests' continual prayer. The divine office from Scripture, fathers, saints. Wisdom of praying Church. Breviary, familiar, necessary, interesting. Its prayer constant; universal; efficacious.

I. Priest's office, constant prayer; more than the Psalmist's seven times a day, though like in division. Always beginning, continuing, ending; a voice like the sound of many waters. Unheard by the world; audible to the ear of the faithful. Even in this country, how continuous! Many thousand full hours of prayer every day; join with them.

II. Universal prayer: everywhere—like the Catholic Church. Priests round the world: their accompanying breviary. In other hands too. On land and sea; by all routes and paths; in deserts and forests; on ships and trains—no place without priest's prayer. Church's example of prayer; our prayerfulness? Practice of early faithful.

III. Efficacious prayer; because public prayer—with the promised Divine assistance; sayings of saints about it; because Church's prayer, joyful adoring, authorized, ever aceptable; because prepared by God to be offered to Himself, mostly in His own words; because directed to His honor, to the salvation of His children.

Conclusion.—Live and pray with living, praying Church. Like the Lord Himself, unlike the world. Believing, trusting, loving intercourse with God; against temptation; for fruitful blessing.

Prayer is the breath of the life of the Church, the sign that she is living, the exercise by which she keeps her organized being in action. Her nature and her mission require that it should be so. She is, and she works for, the salvation of souls; and salvation is fairly commensurate with prayer. "You pray and you are saved," say the saints to us; "you pray not, and you are lost." As holy Church understands this connection of salvation with prayer, she ceases not from so necessary a work.

How much she prays may not be noticed by some Catholics. All are aware that she has many public offices, and that her great Sacrifice is always complete, divinely perfect prayer. But the multitudinous praises and supplications she is constantly sending up may easily escape attention. What is called the Divine office, the priest's office, is her special form of prayer. Next to the Mass

and the Sacraments it is her greatest work. From the day on which St. Peter had to tell the faithful that he and the other apostles could not be occupied with the serving of tables and similar material pursuits, but should give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word, this priestly service of adoration and impetration has never been interrupted.

The general character of this prayer took shape under the hands of the apostles and first fathers, of the saintly bishops, doctors and monks of early times, till the Roman pontiffs finally stereotyped it in our perfect Breviary. That book must be familiar to you, my brethren, at least by sight, for you see it in the hands of your priest from year's end to year's end, and wherever they go 'tis their companion, one of the things from which they are last separated, and without which they least can manage to live. It is chiefly a compendium of Holy Scripture, adapted to times and circumstances, and made sacredly human by an intermingling of heroic lives and supernatural occurrences. It is like the essence of the Church's prayer: her ripe, heavenly wisdom is manifest on all its pages, in every thought suggested and every demand formulated. Like Jacob's mother preparing a dish delightful to the palate of the father who was to bless, she has put on the lips of her chosen ones a form of prayer most sweet to the ears of God, who certainly hears and blesses; and the wealth of blessing is for every one of us a part of our birthright and of our Catholic inheritance. Not one of you, my brethren, need be without a share in the fruits of that Divine office, for it is a public prayer offered in the name of the Church and of all her children. That you may take more interest in it and oftener join with it in intention, I offer you some considerations on it. This Priest's office is a Constant prayer, a Universal prayer, an Efficacious prayer.

I. Now, my brethren, we have but to recall how and by whom the office is recited, to understand that it is, indeed, absolutely ceaseless. You know that our Lord said we should pray always; and, taken individually, we can, the saints tell us, be regarded as always praying if our longing for heavenly things and heaven itself is ever active. But the actual explicit prayer of the Church goes on continually. She is not satisfied with the seven times a day of the Psalmist, though she reproduces him in the sevenfold division of her office, her matins, with lauds, her prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, compline, completing the Scripture number. But all these

parts and the whole office are resounding every instant, ascending constantly from earth to heaven the joyful adoration that is accepted and passes beyond the clouds. While thousands of priests are beginning by asking the Lord himself to open their mouth that they may bless His holy Name, thousands and tens of thousands of others are in the height of their *Te Deum,* or dropping into the concluding *Requiescant in pace.* The mighty chorus surges and swells and mounts and descends, but never is wholly hushed. What is there like it in all the world, or ever was dreamed of in the way of worship? 'Tis comparable to nothing less than the ceaseless song before the throne. 'Tis the exile counterpart of that song, an echo and a response. It need not fear to use words used above; the spirit and the end in view are the same.

It is said in the Apocalypse, where the vision of the Son of Man is detailed, that when He spoke His voice was as the sound of many waters. Similar may we consider this voice of the Church's constant office, multitudinously harmonious, and strong in measureless volume.

But the deaf world does not hear a murmur of this sea of prayer, nor would understand if it did. For its ears are stopped and its heart hardened. We, though, my brethren, should hear and be moved to participate. God is being constantly praised; let us rejoice, adding our "glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." Man is being helped; let us pray him more help, help for all men and for ourselves. There is the confidence that makes good prayer in the knowledge that this most powerful prayer is constantly offered; and with the confidence an uplifting of mind and character that much contributes to our Christian nobility. Where there is so great an intercourse with heaven, earthly things should lose their attraction; some, at least, of their tyranny, should be shaken off. Think only of what happens in these United States. There are here sixteen thousand priests, every one of them saying this office. The exercise takes each of them a good hour a day—more, generally; so that there are sixteen thousand full hours of official, ordered, most highly sanctioned prayer crowded into twenty-four hours. Put it another way: If our priests agreed all to take up the canonical recital by bands, there would be some seven hundred of them freshly storming heaven every hour of the day and every hour of the night. Worth while, is it not, to keep such actual and active prayer in mind and to lean upon it consciously?

It is ours, and its supporting power in this rickety, modern world, is simply incalculable.

II. The priest's office is also a Universal prayer. The term is not used in the foolish sense that prayers might be fashioned to suit all beliefs and all unbeliefs, to express the wishes of sects and parties diverse and contradictory. Nor does it here mean that it impetrates all that real prayer may seek, though that would be fairly true. It signifies rather that it is offered everywhere, that it is the prayer of the Church, and she is Catholic or universal. On every priest of hers, even from the day he was separated to the Lord by subdeaconship and was first made her sacred minister, she imposes her canonical hours. And as priests reside or travel all round the globe, the Divine office is recited from north to south, and from east to west. Hardly anywhere are men now gathered in numbers that a priest does not live or at least pass, and his Breviary is sure to accompany him. Some nuns and lay monks have it also, as they are bound to the same recital. Not an ocean route, not a railroad line, is entirely unblessed by this Catholic prayer. To few even of the great mountain or desert paths is it altogether a stranger. 'Twas said on our Great Lakes and in the dark depths of our forests, while the red man was still master. 'Twas heard in southern isles, where the priest was the only visitor. Even to-day the hurrying trains carry it through wastes where no man cares to tarry. It is at home amid torrid heats, and is not unknown where the snows are perpetual. If there be regions to which it has not yet been brought, they are already same ecclesiastic's territory, and the canonical prayer reaches them in affectionate patronage. No place can be quite withdrawn from its sanctifying influence. Its use establishes not merely a chain of prayer centers, but a network of heavenly intercourse and heavenly protection.

Universal empire was sometimes dreamed of; it never was really set up, and if were, no force could hold it together. Prayer is a power that can be universal, and this obligatory uniform office really exercises a world-wide sway. It is more than literature and art, even humanly speaking, because it maintains ideals of more than earthly aspiration. Unswerving, even when secret, fulfilment of religious duty is a source of highest inspiration; and the men who keep up God's allotted praise, hour by hour, with intermingled supplication for His needed mercy on a thoughtless world, are a mainstay of society.

The Church's insistence and dependence on this practically universal prayer should make us, my brethren, maintain everywhere a practical prayerfulness. We could all find occasion and means for that, if we only wished. We are never far from where the priest's office is being said; we often meet reminders of its recitals; so we can at least let our Christian sympathies run with it. Many of our predecessors in the Faith took very earnest part in the Divine office. They frequented monastic churches and joined in the sacred song. When St. Ambrose had to take refuge in his cathedral from imperial persecuting heresy, his people kept guard around him—St. Monica among them, as her son relates— and passed day and night chanting psalms and hymns, choir responding to choir. The beautiful exercise was afterwards continued; and it spread among the churches, all the world being drawn to emulate so heavenly a service. Our poor earth is still made to speak and sing, and heaven responds: What hinders a thoughtful *Amen* to the petitions and the blessings? At home or abroad we can easily have an intelligently devout participation in the great Church prayer which is so faithfully kept up for God's honor and man's salvation.

III. That the priest's office is an Efficacious prayer needs less to be proved than recalled. Catholics have an instinctive feeling that it is so. They may not think out their reasons for holding it efficacious, nor do they at all confound its efficacy with the Divine efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Sacraments; but they know in general that it has its great intended effects. If they could or did analyze its efficacy, they would find their persuasion about it particularly well founded.

The priest's office is a public prayer, and so is above and beyond even the person who recites it. 'Tis good, indeed, to have it pronounced by lips consecrated to that very purpose, good to have it rising out of the free mind and heart of a person given to God; but yet its efficacy is much more than personal. There pre-eminently attaches to it the promise to the two or three gathered in the Lord's name; for all who are occupied in the stated hours are really in mystic assembly. Priests may even choose the choir, on earth or in heaven, with which they, in spirit, unite their appointed recital. And very great, the wisest guides will tell us, are the differences in efficacy between this Church prayer and all private prayers. "A hundred private prayers," writes St. Alphonsus Liguori, "can never have the efficacy of a single petition presented

in the Divine office; for the latter is offered in the name of the Church, and in God's own words. Hence St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say that in comparison of the office, every other prayer or devotion has but little merit and efficacy before God" (Selva, 295).

The priest's office is the Church's prayer, and hence is efficacious. She has made it her unfailing service of praise, her ever-ascending increase of adoration. She prays and faints not; her adoration is joyful, and so, prophetically, acceptable. For her sake, if for no individual's, the office is never unregarded of heaven. If the prayer of any humble believer pierces the clouds, what force must we not attribute to this confiding address of the faithful Bride of the Lamb, whom He has made to Himself so beautiful, without spot or wrinkle? "Whatsoever you ask in My Name, My Father will give it you," "Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full," are special assurances to her. She does believingly ask in His Name, is authorized to do so, and, like Himself, is heard for her reverence.

Another reason the saints give why this priest's prayer is efficacious is that it is a petition to God prepared and ordered by God Himself. His Spirit has presided over the formation of the Divine office; He has led the universal Church to make it a principal part of her constant worship. Most of the words are His own, and the choice and elaboration of the others has His guiding protection. A father sometimes leads a child into a form of request that he, the father, will pleasantly grant. Similar may be considered God's action in providentially building up for His Church a form of prayer most agreeable to Himself, and hence most worthy to be heard and answered. 'Tis He Himself that has filled His Sion with the ineffable words, and its people with His glory; 'tis He that keeps her "instant in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving" (Col. iv, 2).

What the Church asks in the office is exactly what God wishes to grant. Her petitions are after His own heart. Like her Divine Spouse, she is asking—often with the strong cry and tears—that the Father be glorified, and that none may be lost of the children He has given her. Who better than she could say: "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall be always in my mouth. In the Lord shall my soul be praised; let the meek hear and rejoice. Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us extol His Name together.

I sought the Lord, and He heard me; and He delivered me from all my troubles. Come ye to Him and be enlightened; and your faces shall not be confounded" (Ps. xxxiii). To every doubting soul she can repeat: "With me is prayer to the God of my life. I will say to God: 'Thou art my support. . . . Hope thou in God, for I will still give praise to Him, the salvation of my countenance, and my God" (Ps. xli). And to all mankind her exhortation still is: Sing praises to our God, sing ye; sing praises to our King, sing ye. For God is the King of all the earth; sing ye wisely" (Ps. xlvi).

Conclude, then, my brethren, to be prayerful members of a praying Church. Appreciate your privilege of being living members of so living a Church. She breathes prayer; she ceases not from it. So have the friends of God always acted; for they know that prayer is but dutiful intercourse with Him in whom they believe, in whom they hope, and whom they love. So did the Lord of Glory Himself, during His earthly career, going out and spending the night in what Scripture calls "the prayer of God" (Luke vi, 12). The world is never more stupidly wicked, more hopelessly ungodly, than when it refuses to pray. Its blind self-sufficiency is a suicidal curse. In brave contradiction and abiding witness, the Church of Christ says: "Pray, pray, pray that you enter not into temptation." In patient assiduity, cost what it may, she maintains her Divine office of praise and petition, always imploring that the earth that was blessed may be blessed still more, and may everywhere give its hundredfold return. Amen.

XLVII. THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

BY THE REV. CHARLES COPPENS, S.J.

"This is a great Sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the Church."—Eph. v, 32.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction and proposition direct and brief.

I. The banns: meaning requirements and purpose of the banns, no reason for avoiding them, but the contrary.

II. The marriage ceremony explained. (1) *The persons present;* (2) *free consent essential;* (3) *the marriage contract made and blessed;* (4) *state of grace;* (5) *the ring:* (*a*) *its meaning;* (*b*) *its blessing;* (*c*) *its bestowal on the bride;* (*d*) *confirmatory prayer and blessing;* (*e*) *contrast between a Catholic and a mixed marriage.*

III. The nuptial Mass explained. (1) *Comparison of Catholic marriage and marriage of Cana;* (2) *in what the solemnization of Matrimony consists;* (3) *for whom it is intended;* (4) *the parts of the Mass explained:* (*a*) *the introit;* (*b*) *the collect;* (*c*) *the epistle, with application;* (*d*) *the gradual;* (*e*) *the secret prayer;* (*f*) *the solemn nuptial blessing;* (*g*) *reception of Holy Communion;* (*h*) *the Post-Communion;* (*i*) *the last blessing.*

Conclusion.—The nuptial Mass very desirable.

My dear brethren: We have treated several times before of the Sacrament of Matrimony, taking each time a different view of this important subject. To-day we will consider it in its liturgical aspect; that is, we will study the Church ceremonies which are used both to give validity and add dignity to the celebration of the Sacrament, and to explain to the faithful the full significance of this sacred rite.

I. The first step taken in our churches in this matter is the proclamation of the banns. That is, the intended marriage is to be announced at high Mass on three successive Sundays or festivals, in the parish churches of both the bridegroom and the bride. All the faithful are thereby commanded to make known to the pastor any impediment they may know of which would be a hindrance to the intended marriage.

The purpose of the banns is to protect the honor and other interests of the Church and of the faithful. For it would disgrace the Church if one of her pastors would assist at a marriage forbidden by her laws; and it would be a sad misfortune for the two spouses, if, after they have been publicly married, it were then discovered that

the contract was invalid, and they would have to separate from each other. Sometimes ill-instructed persons are ashamed of having their banns proclaimed. They should, on the contrary, be proud of it, for it means that the union is an honorable one, to which no objection is known.

II. We will next explain the marriage ceremony itself. The pastor, or another priest acting in his place, enters the sanctuary wearing a surplice and a white stole, the white color denoting that matrimony is in the eyes of the Church a joyous celebration. The validity of the contract requires also the presence of two witnesses, and, of course, the bridegroom and the bride should, in all propriety, be attended by their relatives and friends. The priest begins by interrogating each of the contracting parties separately about their consent to the marriage. First he asks the bridegroom: "Wilt thou take the bride here present [mentioning by name], for thy lawful wife, according to the rite of our holy Mother, the Church?" After he has received the answer, "I will," the priest similarly interrogates the bride, "Wilt thou take the bridegroom here present for thy lawful husband, according to the rite of our holy Mother, the Church?" The assent must be expresed by either in the words "I will."

You notice, my dear brethren, that holy Church, at the very opening of the ceremony, requires from each party a clear statement that there is true and free consent to the union which is about to take place. This condition is absolutely necessary, for marriage is a mutual contract, and contracts are not binding unless they proceed from the real and free consent of the contracting parties. Besides, to protect the right of her children, the Church has made a strict law that if either party to the marriage would give only a pretended and no real consent, or would not consent freely but only through grievous fear of unjust compulsion, there shall be no valid marriage at all.

When the deliberate consent of both has thus been publicly declared, the moment has arrived to enter on the solemn compact. The ceremony is very impressive, and clearly significant of the irrevocable binding force of the marital contract. For the priest now bids the bridegroom and the bride to hold each other's right hand, and in this position to pronounce the formula which ancient usage has consecrated to that purpose. First the bridegroom and next the bride pronounces the words: "I take thee for my lawful

wife (or husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part." The words used emphatically express the absolute prohibition of divorce, "till death do us part."

The contract is now completed, and the contract constitutes the Sacrament for Christians. The priest proceeds to confirm and bless it, saying, "I join you in Matrimony, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." And, saying this, he makes over the married couple the holy sign of the Cross.

The Sacrament of Matrimony must be received in the state of grace; to receive it in sin would be a sacrilege. If received in the proper dispositions, it confers on the recipients not only a present increase of holiness, as every Sacrament does, but also for future needs a rich supply of actual graces, which will greatly lighten the burdens of the married state and conduce to the attainment of the purposes of such union, chiefly the mutual help of husband and wife in life's difficulties and the proper raising of a happy family of children.

The next ceremony is the blessing of the nuptial ring. Unlike a bar, which has its two extremities pointing in opposite directions, a ring betokens a close bond of union, and is thus an appropriate emblem of the union of two persons into one. To signify that this union is holy, the priest pronounces over the ring an appointed blessing, saying: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who created heaven and earth. Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto thee. The Lord be with you, and with thy spirit. Let us pray. 'Bless, O Lord, this ring, which we bless in Thy name, that she who shall wear it, observing inviolate fidelity to her spouse, may dwell in peace and in Thy will, and may ever live in mutual charity, through Christ our Lord. Amen.'"

Then the priest blesses the ring with holy water in the form of the Cross; and the bridegroom, accepting it from the priest's hand, puts it on the ring-finger of his partner's left hand, saying: "With this ring I thee wed, and I plight unto thee my troth." And the priest, blessing them, adds: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, confirm, O God, what thou hast worked in our midst, from Thy holy temple, which is in Jerusalem.

"Lord, have mercy on us; Christ, have mercy on us; Lord, have mercy on us." Then he recites the "Our Father," and continues thus: "Save thy servants, Lord, who hope in Thee; send them help

from Thy holy place, and from Sion protect them; be to them a tower of strength against the face of the enemy. Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto Thee. The Lord be with you, and with thy spirit. Let us pray. Look down, we beseech Thee, O Lord, upon these Thy servants, and benignly assist the ordinances which Thou hast instituted for the increase of the human race; that those whom Thy will hath united may be preserved by Thy help, through Christ, our Lord."

The sacramental contract is now completed, and copious benedictions have been invoked upon the bridegroom and bride, such as are signified by the sacred ceremonies performed and by the prayers offered to God. But the ritual bids us remark that none of those solemn rites, none of those formal benedictions are to be used at mixed marriages, that is, when one of the parties is not a Catholic; nor are the surplice and stole then to be worn, nor is the marriage to be performed in the church. Such unions are no cause of joy, but of sadness to holy Mother, the Church, because they are a source of grievous evils. She may give a reluctant consent to them to avoid worse consequences, which would follow if her minister were not present at the contract. But she grieves over them, and, to express her mourning, she bids her minister perform merely what is necessary for the validity of the contract, and omit every religious rite.

III. The next liturgical junction of a Catholic marriage, my brethren, is the holy Mass, read or sung for the welfare of the bridegroom and the bride. We read in Holy Scripture that Christ designed to assist in person at the marriage feast of Cana. Would it not be an exceeding honor and happiness if, in His infinite condescension, He would similarly honor by His personal presence the marriages of His followers at the present day? It looks at first sight as if this were an extravagant wish, the very expression of which is presumption on the part of poor sinful man. And yet, my brethren, that is just what our beneficent Lord wishes to do, and holy Church urges us to accept His merciful invitation. For this purpose it is her desire that the performance of the marriage should be followed by the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which is to be offered for the welfare of the married couple. During Mass Christ is as truly present as He was in the midst of the guests at the marriage feast of Cana. As there He changed the water into wine, so here, on this occasion, He transforms the natural love of two human

hearts into the supernatural charity of the children of God. It is the ardent wish of holy Church that the Catholic marriage should be followed by the holy Sacrifice of the Mass; hence, I wish next to explain what is peculiar to this celebration.

The solemnization of Matrimony properly consists in the nuptial benediction which is given, and can only be given, during the Mass specially appointed for this purpose, and which is called in the missal "the Mass for Bridegroom and Bride." The Church is very desirous that all the married faithful should receive this nuptial benediction; so that, if any did not receive it on the day of their marriage, she urges them to do so on some later day. The only exception is the case of a widow who marries again; she cannot receive this nuptial blessing at her new marriage if she received it on a former occasion. But for those who have never yet received the nuptial blessing, it is always possible, provided both parties are alive, to have this Mass read or sung and the nuptial blessing pronounced. During this Mass the bridegroom and bride are kneeling before the altar. The priest, after the usual prayers at the foot of the altar, ascends and goes to the Missal at the Epistle side, where he says the following Introit: "May the Lord of Israel join you together, and may He be with you; and now, O Lord, make them bless Thee more fully. Blessed are they that fear the Lord, that walk in His ways." The Collect is next read or sung: "Graciously hear us, almighty and merciful God, that what is performed by our ministry may be abundantly filled with Thy blessing, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen." The Epistle of the nuptial Mass is taken from the fifth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, verses 22 to 33, in which we find these sublime thoughts: "Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loves the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life; that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having a spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. For this cause shall man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great Sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the Church."

You notice, my brethren, that St. Paul compares the marital union of bridegroom and bride to the union of Christ with His

Church; and therefore he says that the husband must love his wife as Christ loved the Church, and sacrificed Himself for it; and as the Church is loving and obedient to Christ, so must the wife be loving and obedient to her husband, who is in place of Christ. See to what exalted dignity this explanation raises the Sacrament of Matrimony.

After the Epistle follows the Gradual, which is so very beautiful. It says: "Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. May the Lord bless thee out of Sion; and mayest thou see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. And mayest thou see thy children's children; peace upon Israel." Later on the secret prayer is said, which is as follows: "Receive, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the offering we make for the sacred law of Matrimony; and be Thou the disposer of the work of which Thou art the author."

The Canon is the same as in all other Masses, till the *Pater Noster* has been said or sung. Then the priest, standing at the Epistle corner of the altar, and turning towards the bridegroom and bride, says over them the following very solemn prayer: "Favorably hear our supplications, O Lord, and graciously protect Thy institution which Thou hast ordained for the propagation of mankind; that the union made by Thy appointment may be preserved by Thy aid. Let us pray. "O God, who by the power of Thy might didst make all things of nothing, and having ordered the beginning of the universe, and made man in the image of God, didst so provide for him the inseparable aid of woman as to give to the body of woman its beginning from the flesh of man, teaching us what it pleased Thee to form from one it should never be lawful to disjoin; O God, who hast consecrated the conjugal union by so excellent a mystery, as to represent the Sacrament of Christ and the Church by the nuptial contract; O God, by whom woman is united with man, and that alliance ordained in the beginning is endowed with that blessing which alone was not taken away either by the punishment of original sin, nor by the sentence of the deluge; look down favorably upon this Thy hand-maid, who, being now to be joined in Matrimony, seeks to be defended by Thy protection. May there be upon her a yoke of charity and peace; faithful and chaste may she marry in Christ, and be an imitator of holy women. May she be pleasing to her husband, like Rachel, prudent like Rebecca, long-lived and faithful like Sara. May the author of sin have no

share in any of her actions. May she remain constant to the faith and commandments; united to one may she avoid all unlawful connection. May she protect her weakness by the strength of discipline. May she be grave in bashfulness, venerable in modesty, instructed in heavenly doctrine. May she be fruitful in offspring, approved and innocent; and may she arrive at the rest of the blessed in Thy heavenly kingdom; and may they both see their children's children, even to the third and fourth generation, and arrive at their desired old age."

After this very impressive prayer, Mass is continued, and at the usual time holy Communion is given to the married couple, unless they should have received it at an earlier hour or preferred not to communicate on that day. Next the priest prays again, saying: "Behold, thus shall every man be blessed that feareth the Lord; and mayest thou see thy children's children; peace upon Israel. Let us pray. We beseech Thee, almighty God, to accompany the institution of Thy providence with Thy gracious favor; that Thou mayest preserve in lasting peace those whom Thou joinest in lawful union. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

Before giving the usual blessing at the end of the Mass, the priest once more turns to the newly married couple and prays: "May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob be with you, and may He fulfil His blessings in you; that you may see your children's children to the third and fourth generation, and afterwards life everlasting, by the assistance of our Lord Jesus Christ."

He may then address, if he thinks proper, some further instruction or exhortation to the recipients of the Sacrament. Lastly, he sprinkles them with holy water, and then concludes the Mass as usual.

My dear brethren, a marriage thus blessed and entered into in the proper dispositions of mind and heart cannot fail to have upon it the richest benediction of Him who is the giver of all good things. If the faithful duly appreciate these advantages, all will be most anxious to have their nuptials followed by the Mass appointed for the bridegroom and the bride.

XLVIII. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

"It is, therefore, a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins."—II. Maccabees xii, 46.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Protestant criticism of Catholis burial rites unjust, because they do not witness the whole of Catholic obsequies. The Church thinks more of the soul than of the body; believes that "it is a holy and wholesome thought," etc. Herein the difference between Protestant and Catholic burial rites.

Catholic rites, indeed, express hope, but also the sense of man's sinfulness and the dread of the Divine wrath. This summed up in Cardinal Newman's words from "Gerontius."

I. The Office of the Dead.—Vespers; matins and lauds. Brief description of the sentiments expressed in Psalms, Antiphons and Lessons. Then pass on to consideration of the Requiem Mass. "Why do some Catholics spend money on a grand funeral and neglect to have Holy Mass offered?"

II. The Requiem Mass.—In the Requiem Mass the Church hushes the voice of praise; all is supplication, awe and self-abasement in view of judgment and the nothingness of man. Fitness of the Gregorian chant for expressing these sentiments. Introit, Prayer, Gradual; Dies Irae; Epistle and Gospel; Secret. Omission of the blessing.

III. The Absolutions and Burial.—Meaning of absolution in this connection. Description of the rite. The procession to the grave. Committal of the body to the earth.

IV. Cremation.—Reasons why the Church forbids this practice, viz.: Pagan origin of cremation. Present connection with materialism and irreligion. Indecency of thus treating what was the temple of the Holy Ghost. Impossibility after cremation of detecting poison or violence. Thus Christian charity and the interests of humanity are against cremation. Strictly forbidden by Leo XIII. in 1886.

Non-Catholics, my dear brethren in Jesus Christ, who are sometimes present at Catholic burials, not unfrequently compare our burial service unfavorably with that of the Protestant Church, declaring it to be but a meagre performance when contrasted with what they term the dignified and apt "Order for the Burial of the Dead," contained in their Prayer Book. In the explanation that I now propose to give you of the rites with which the Church Catholic surrounds that last solemn act of the survivors toward a departed Christian, the committing of the body to that dust from which it sprang, we shall see whether this reproach is justified. In fact, by the expression that I have just used, I have hit upon the very misapprehension that causes Protestants sometimes to level that

reproach against us. For, in truth, the committing to the earth of this poor clay of which our bodily part is formed is but a small and secondary part of the office which the Church performs towards her departed children. We have a higher, nobler part, which does not die, which sprang from a higher source than the dust of the earth, which was breathed into our bodies by the breath of God Himself—the soul, immortal and spiritual, the direct creation of the almighty Hand. It is with the *soul* that the Church is chiefly concerned in her burial rites; for she believes, as did the chosen people of old, that "it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins." It is this doctrine that makes the difference between a Catholic and a Protestant burial. The Protestant burial service is beautiful and touching, we may readily admit. It is in part drawn from the Catholic Mass and Office for the Dead; but there are significant omissions. There is not one word of prayer for the soul of the deceased. It seems to be taken for granted that he has already entered into bliss. The idea of a place of purgation, the thought that few are so pure and holy at death as to be found worthy of an immediate entrance into heaven, to stand in the presence of the all-holy God, and at once become the companions of angels and saints the Spirits of the Just made perfect, seem not to have entered into the minds of the compilers of the Anglican Liturgy. Or, rather, must we not say that these considerations were deliberately excluded? Not so with the Catholic rites. In these we find expressed, indeed, a great and consoling hope for the salvation of those who have died in the bosom of their Mother, the Catholic Church, Christ's Bride, whose children have God for their Father. She has aided them on their death-beds with her holy Sacraments; she has led them into the valley of the shadow of death and there given them into the keeping of Jesus; and she hopes, with a consoling assurance, for their eternal happiness. But she forgets not the awful sanctity of God. She remembers that "nothing defiled can enter heaven"; she knows that many shall be saved "yet so as by fire." She knows human frailty and human weakness, and she has no delusions concerning the dread truth that Divine justice has its claims as well as Divine mercy its pitiful indulgence. She realizes that a soul with a heavy load of offenses against God, even though they have been forgiven by means of the saving Sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction, is yet liable to a debt of temporal punishment; and, moreover, is imperfect and

weighed down by evil habits and dispositions that must need be purged away before that soul can bear the blinding light of the presence of God. How beautifully is this expressed in the words of the angel in Cardinal Newman's great Poem, the "Dream of Gerontius":

> ". . . . Praise to His Name!
> The eager spirit has darted from my hold,
> And, with the intemperate energy of love,
> Flies to the dear feet of Emmanuel;
> But, ere it reach them, the keen sanctity,
> Which with its effluence, like a glory, clothes
> And circles round the Crucified, has serged,
> And scorched, and shrivelled it; and now it lies
> Passive and still before the awful Throne.
> A happy, suffering soul! For it is safe,
> Consumed, yet quickened, by the glance of God."

I. *The Office of the Dead.*—The full ceremonies of burial commence with the recitation of the "Office of the Dead," consisting of Vespers, Matins, and Lauds. The Vesper psalms with their antiphons, breathe hope, longing for that Supreme Good from whom sin keeps us, and earnest supplication on the part of the living for the soul of their departed fellow-Christian. "The sorrows of death have compassed me; and the perils of hell have found me; and I called upon the Name of the Lord. O Lord, deliver my soul. The Lord is merciful and just, and our God showeth mercy. . . . I will please the Lord in the land of the living" (Ps. cxiv). "Wo is me, that my sojourning is prolonged! I have dwelt with the inhabitants of Cedar; my soul hath been long a sojourner" (Ps. cxix). "Out of the depths I have cried unto thee, O Lord, Lord hear my voice" (Ps. cxxix), and in the last psalm of the Vesper Office we have the note of hope, "The Lord will repay for me. Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever; O despise not the works of Thy hands" (Ps. cxxxvii). At the end of each psalm, instead of the *Gloria Patri,* we have the supplicating appeal: "Eternal Rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them," and the Office concludes with beautiful prayers, of which the last, at least, is familiar to you all: "O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful; grant to the souls of Thy servants departed the remission of all their sins, that by pious supplications they may obtain that pardon which they have always desired."

After Vespers follows the Office of Matins and Lauds. All these offices, when possible, should be recited in presence of the corpse, which is brought into the church for that purpose. Matins consists of three divisions, called "Nocturnes." Each Nocturne consists of three Psalms and three Lessons taken from Holy Scripture. The Lessons in the Office of the Dead are taken from the Book of Job; those passages being selected in which the holy man laments the miseries of his afflicted condition, and begs the mercy of God, whose chastising hand has fallen so heavily upon him. His words are full of sad recognition of the nothingness of man and the vanity of human life; the uncertainty of fortune, and the terror of the Divine vengeance upon sin. At the same time that God who avenges sin, is still a God of mercy who will not be angry forever. "Spare me, O God, for my days are nothing. . . . I have sinned; what shall I do to thee, O Keeper of men? Why hast Thou set me opposite Thee, and I am become burdensome to myself? Why dost Thou not remove my sin, and why dost Thou not take away my iniquity?" (Job vii). "I will say to God: Do not condemn me; tell me why Thou judgest me so. . . . Remember, I beseech Thee, that Thou hast made me as the clay, and Thou wilt bring me into the dust again? . . . Suffer me, therefore, that I may lament my sorrow a little" (Job x). After each lesson is recited a Responsory, in which, often in the very words of Scripture, the Church gathers up the teaching and sentiment of the Psalms and Lessons and impresses upon us the feelings of her own mind, mingling with her words pious aspirations from the living for their own souls, and touching appeals to the Divine mercy on behalf of the dead. "Do Thou, O Lord, who didst raise Lazarus from the tomb, give rest and pardon to them, who wilt come to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire." "Alas, O Lord, that I have sinned much in my life. What shall I do, miserable man that I am? Whither shall I flee, but to Thee, O my God. Have mercy upon me when Thou comest in that last day. My soul is exceeding troubled, but do Thou, O Lord, help me?" "I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

The Office of Lauds, which follows Matins, is similar to Vespers in its general arrangement, and full of the same expressive and instructive mingling of prayer for the dead, of warning and supplication for the living, with holy dread of the Divine judgments and consoling hope in God's mercy that characterizes the whole of the

rites for the final obsequies, and form an inimitable example of liturgical beauty, solemnity and impressiveness.

But we must pass on to the central act of the funeral rites of the Catholic Church, without which they would be shorn of more than half their efficacy for the living and the dead. I mean, of course, the Requiem Mass, in which the Holy Sacrifice of Christ's Body and Blood is offered for the souls of those who have gone before us. Why is it, dear breathren, that Catholics will spend great sums of money upon flowers, and a grand funeral, which can do no good whatever to the departed, and yet grudge the alms for Masses that would hasten the entrance of their dear ones into the bliss of heaven? It is surely not necessary for me to prove to you that of all things that can be done for the relief of the suffering souls in Purgatory, the offering of holy Mass is unspeakably the most efficacious. Will flowers, and a long line of carriages, and a funeral feast, and rich mourning costumes, give any consolation to those who are agonizing in Purgatory, and longing, with an intense agony of baffled love, for that God who alone can give them any peace, and from whom they are kept away by stains that you could remove by having the holy Mass said for them? I do not condemn that proper decency which respect and love for the departed rightly demand in the carrying out of funerals; but I do condemn useless ostentation which too often has for its motive to make good appearance before the world. Should we Catholics be less anxious for our departed than was the pious Judas Machabeus, who, as we read in Holy Scripture, after a great battle against the enemies of God's people, "making a gathering, sent twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead?" (II. Mach. xii, 43). It is a poor piety and a weak affection that will strew flowers upon the grave where rests the body, and yet deprive the soul of that refreshment, light, and peace which the Holy Sacrifice will procure.

II. *The Requiem Mass.*—Let us glance now at the central rite of our Catholic obsequies, the Requiem Mass, offered for the repose of the soul of the defunct. You are doubtless familiar, by experience, with the differences in the ceremonial of Mass for the dead which distinguish it from an ordinary Mass. Awe-struck in the presence of death, with the silent corpse, that sad and vivid reminder of what we must all come to, laid before God's altar, the Church hushes for this occasion the voice of praise. The sacred

ministers are vested in black; the Alleluia, the Gloria Patri, the Gloria in Excelsis are not heard. From beginning to end of the Mass we hear only the voice of supplication. In this solemn rite that trembling awe of judgment to come, those earnest prayers for mercy on the departed soul, those awe-inspiring prophecies of the last great day and of the dreadful Judge coming in power and majesty to judge the world by fire, those humble expressions of self-abasement and acknowledgments of the utter nothingness of man, which we have already heard in the office, reach their climax. It is scarcely necessary for me to dwell upon the fitness of that sublime chant which the Church uses in the Requiem Mass for the expression of these sentiments. This fitness is acknowledged by all. It is generally conceded that no composer, however eminent, has succeeded in equalling the Church's own music as a vehicle for the solemn words of the Mass for the dead.

We will now glance briefly at this great liturgical drama of life and death, of judgment and divine wrath, of tender hope and pathetic appeal.

For the Introit, we have that familiar prayer, "Eternal rest give to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them," followed by words from the sixty-fourth Psalm, which tell us of the last end of all mankind, and carry us at once to the next world and the immediate presence of God: "A hymn, O Lord, becometh Thee in Sion; and a vow shall be paid to Thee in Jerusalem. O, hear my prayer; all flesh shall come to Thee." After the "Kyrie Eleison," with its repeated cry for mercy to the Adorable Trinity, the priest passes on at once to the prayer, in which the name of the departed is mentioned, that name by which he was baptized, that name known to God, without whose knowledge not even a sparrow falls to the ground, that name which has many times and oft been repeated in intercessory prayer by Mary and the saints and the Guardian Angel, who but now has presented the soul of him who owned it at the feet of God. The Epistle is from the first of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, and bids us not give way to a pagan grief at the death of him whom we loved, telling us of the glory to come when we shall ascend to heaven in company with Jesus: "We will not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them who have slept through Jesus will God bring with Him. . . . for the Lord Himself shall

come down from heaven with commandment, and with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God," and "we shall be taken up together . . . to meet Christ . . . and so shall we be always with the Lord. Therefore, comfort ye one another with these words" (I. Thess. iv, 12, seq.). The Gradual and Tract repeat the prayer for mercy and for deliverance from those bound of sin that hold the soul from the immediate fruition of heaven; and then follows that marvelous sequence, the *Dies Irae,* unsurpassed for its religious pathos and power to move the hearts of all hearers. It is, in truth, at once a sublime prayer, a most impressive sermon, and a meditation that cannot fail to move and to convert. Therein we seem to see the great Throne set, and the Judge thereon; the open book, the multitudes of men on the right hand and the left; the hosts of angels, the dreadful Accuser, the roaring flames of the eternal prison-house, the awful terror of the lost. But the hymn finishes with words of hope in the mercy of Him who, though our Judge, is yet our loving Saviour.

Time will not allow me to quote from this great liturgical hymn, but I would earnestly recommend you all to use it frequently in your private devotions. Its truth, its beauty, its spirit of simple faith, its awful warnings, its lesson of humble self-abasement cannot fail to exercise the most salutary influence upon yourselves if you then familiarize yourself with its holy and sublime sentiments. The gospel is from St. John, and gives us in our divine Lord's words the doctrine that He so solemnly and emphatically taught concerning the resurrection of the dead, the resurrection to life eternal of those who have done well, the resurrection to judgment and condemnation of those who have done evil. The Offertory recalls to us how from the beginning the promise of eternal life has been made to those who have believed, and speaks of Abraham, that great example of faith, who merited to be chosen as the forefather of God's people. We, as the apostle tells us, are the spiritual children of Abraham, who himself was only saved through faith in the Redeemer to come whom we, too, worship, and under whose new dispensation it is our happiness to live and die. God is entreated that the great Archangel Michael may conduct the souls of the departed into His holy light, and that He will receive the sacrifice and prayers now being offered for them. In the "secret" appeal is made to the Divine mercy in virtue of the Christian name and profession of the departed, that as God "has granted him the

merit of Christian faith, so also He will bestow upon him its reward." Then the Mass proceeds as usual to that supreme moment when the Divine Victim is lifted up before the Throne of the Father to plead for both living and dead. At the conclusion of the Mass no blessing is given; it is as if the Church were too much concerned with the welfare of the dead to bless the living. Also, instead of the usual "Ite missa est," or "Benedicamas Domino," is substituted the prayer "Requiescant in Pace," "May they rest in Peace. Amen."

III. *The Absolutions and Burial.*—The Holy Sacrifice being finished, the priest puts off the chasuble and maniple, and assumes the black cope, after which he proceeds to give what are known as the Absolutions. This word must not be misunderstood as if any pardon for unrepented sin can be given by the Church after death. Though, as you are well aware, this is not so, yet the Church's official prayers, if I may use that word, the prayers, that is, which she offers up as Christ's holy Bride, and exercising Christ's own priestly office of intercession through her consecrated ministers, are of special efficacy in obtaining release for the souls in Purgatory. This applies, of course, to all the prayers of the obsequies from beginning to end.

The "Absolutions" begin with a prayer for the living: "Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death in that terrible day when the heavens and the earth are moved, when Thou comest to judge the world by fire." Note, dear brethren, how the use of the present tense brings vividly before us that day of wrath, as if it were actually come. "I tremble and fear while that judgment comes and the coming wrath. Oh, that day, that day of anger and calamity and misery! Oh, day, great and exceeding bitter; when Thou comest to judge the world by fire." After the Kyrie Eleison and the "Pater Noster," during the recitation of which the officiant sprinkles with holy water and incenses the corpse, the final prayer is said before the mournful procession sets out for the cemetery to commit the body to that earth from which man came.

At the beginning of this part of the obsequies are recited the Psalms De Profundis, "Out of the Depths," and the Royal Penitent's prayer for pardon, the "Miserere." Then follows an invocation of the saints and angels. "Come to his assistance, ye saints of God, meet him, ye angels of the Lord, receiving his soul, offering it in the sight of the Most High. May Christ receive thee, who has

called thee, and may the angels receive thee into Abraham's bosom." It will be understood that the order of these prayers and ceremonies varies according as the full rites that I have described are carried out or not. While the body is actually being carried to the grave, the following antiphon, full of Christian hope and the sense of fellowship with the saints of God, is sung: "May the angels lead thee into Paradise; may the martyrs receive thee at thy coming, and bring thee into the holy city, Jerusalem. May the choir of angels receive thee, and with Lazarus, who once was poor, mayest thou have eternal rest."

On arriving at the grave, if it is not blessed, the priest blesses it, and the body is lowered. The rites then conclude with the singing of the Benedictus, with an antiphon consisting of those words of Jesus Christ which are the very light of the grave, dispelling fear and sorrow, and taking away the sting of death: "I am the resurrection and life; he that believeth in Me, though he be dead, yet shall he live; and every one that liveth and believeth in Me shall not die forever."

Once when the Kyrie and Pater Noster are said, the body incensed and sprinkled, and a final prayer for mercy uttered, and all is finished that Christian love and respect can do for that earthly frame which was once the tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, and the recipient of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Cremation.—This last thought, dear brethren, sums up for us the reasons why the Church forbids to all her children the practise of cremation or burning of the dead. Does not our Christian Catholic instinct shrink from such a thing? Let me briefly draw out, in conclusion, the motives of the Church's action in this respect. To begin with, cremation was a pagan custom, unknown to the Jews, God's chosen people, under the old law. In this the Jews were followed from the first by the Christian Church, in imitation also of the mode of burial of our Lord Himself. As a recent writer has said [see "Catholic Encyclopedia," Art. "Cremation"]: "Cremation, in the majority of cases to-day, is knit up with circumstances that make it a public profession of irreligion and materialism. Freemasons first obtained official recognition of this custom from various governments. The Church has opposed from the beginning a practise which has been used chiefly by opponents of the faith. She is justified by reasons of Christian charity and the interests of humanity. It is unseemly that the human body, once the living

temple of God, the instrument of heavenly virtue, sanctified so often by the Sacraments, should finally be subjected to a treatment that filial piety, fraternal and conjugal love, or even mere friendship, seems to revolt against as inhuman." Again, "Another argument against cremation, and drawn from medico-legal sources, lies in this: that cremation destroys all signs of violence or traces of poison, and make examination impossible; whereas a judicial autopsy is always possible after exhumation, even of some months."

The arguments in favor of the practise from supposed reasons of public health are not supported by any unanimity of opinion on the part of medical and professional scientific men, and are shown by the same writer whom I have quoted above to be without solid foundation in fact. More than one Pope has absolutely forbidden the practise of cremation, and the late holy Father Leo XIII., of happy memory, issued in 1886 a decree in which he forbade membership in cremation societies, and declared the unlawfulness of demanding cremation for one's own body or that of another. The sentiment of the civilized world in general is at one with that of the Church in this matter; and we Catholics can trust herein the Christian instinct and the authoritative guidance of the rulers of God's Church. Pagan in its origin, adopted now by those who do not believe in the resurrection of the body, the burning of the dead is an outrage upon the sentiments of nature and Christianity alike.

"He is not dead," said our divine Lord of Lazarus, "but sleepeth"; and death to a Christian is but a sleep. Committing the bodies of her children to the earth, the Church recognizes the origin from when they sprang, and in beautiful symbolism laying the departed tenderly to rest in its narrow bed, typifies that sleep of the mortal remains of the just from which the trumpet of God's angel shall arouse them to reign with Christ.

XLIX. THE FEASTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

BY DOM BERNARD HAYES, O.S.B.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Present neglect of the liturgy and its probable results. The liturgy sets before us annually the life of Christ and of those associated with Him, among whom Mary holds the chief place.

II. One feast is not sufficient to set forth her life, therefore, she has many feasts. These fall into two classes: (1) Those which bring before us Mary's life, its chief events and the great mysteries connected with it. (2) Other feasts to draw our attention more strongly to special aspects of our Lady; to her virtues, power or relations to us her children. These two classes are developed from the liturgy.

III. This great devotion to our Lady must not be a cause of scandal or surprise, for her life was closely bound up with the Incarnation and Redemption. In prophecy and in fulfilment we shall find that this was the Divine plan. Therefore, the liturgy merely echoes the reality.

IV. Jesus and Mary, therefore, may not be separated. If they are, a wrong view of Jesus will be taken. The Church has never separated them, with the result that they are inseparable in her children's affection . . . Let us make every use of the liturgy of the Church to give us this true feeling for Jesus and Mary.

I. In these days of easy printing, my brethren, there are many books of devotion issued and new ones are ever appearing, with the result that the piety of the faithful finds stimulus and sustenance for itself from sources different from those which the Church drew from during so many centuries. Before the days of rapid printing, the faithful used the Liturgy of the Church. This sufficed for the needs of all souls; it was an inexhaustible fountain for the thirsty wayfarers. It grew up together with the Church; it was her voice, the breath of her life, and those who used it knew that it was a treasury of devotion, endowed with the highest authority, which gave to them a spirit of devotion, authentic, strong, and truly Catholic. May we not think, my brethren, that the decay of the Catholic spirit in the world is caused, in part at least, by the neglect of the Liturgy? Men's minds no longer meditate upon the thoughts which the Church has set out for each year; their wills are no longer filled with the sentiments with which the Church has surrounded the great truths commemorated in her Liturgy. There is no need of apology then, my brethren, if I call your attention to-day to one aspect of the Liturgy, viz.: the place held therein by the feasts of our Lady. I choose this example of the Liturgy the more gladly

because it has been open to misconstruction by those who are not of the household of the faith.

The Liturgy of the Church sets before us the Incarnation in all its phases; each scene of our Lord's life is reproduced, the great mysteries are recalled, and those chosen souls are invoked and commemorated who were with Jesus Christ during His life on earth, or who have in their own lives most notably reproduced the virtues of their Saviour. Thus, in the Liturgy, we have not only our Lord's own life present, but also those of the saints, and, above all, of His blessed Mother.

II. That holy Mother was so intimately connected with the whole scheme of the Incarnation that her life was full of mysteries and graces, and one feast is not sufficient to illustrate her office and prerogatives. There are, therefore, many feasts of the Blessed Virgin during the year. They fall naturally into two groups: (1) Those which bring before us Mary's life; its chief events and the great mysteries connected with it. These are the greater festivals of our Lady, and they form an integral part of that annual setting forth of the different facts of the Incarnation which is the chief object of the Liturgy. (2) Though Mary's position, graces, and work are chiefly shown to us by these greater feasts, yet holy Church draws our attention and devotion more particularly to special aspects of our Lady—her virtues, power, and relations to us, her children. This she does by lesser feasts, many of which are only of local interest or are intended to develop special devotions. Let us now, my brethren, see what these feasts are and how they illustrate Mary's life. The first group, as I have said, set forth the life of Mary and its share in the Incarnation and Redemption. These feasts have an order amongst them corresponding to the time of those events of her life which they commemorate; and, naturally, the first feast is that of the Immaculate Conception. We all believe, my brethren, that, since its definition by Pope Pius IX. on the 8th of December, 1854, this great mystery has been an article of faith. When God created the most pure soul of Mary and united it to the body which was prepared for it, by His Almighty Power, He saved it from contracting the stain of original sin, and filled it with immeasurable grace. The feast recalls this great prerogative of our blessed Mother. The Church hails her: "Thou art all fair, O Mary, and the stain of original sin is not in thee. Thy garment is white as snow, and thy face is as the sun. Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou

art the joy of Israel, thou art the honor of our people." She applies to our Lady the following words from the Book of Proverbs, which tell us of the eternity of God's designs: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways, before He made anything from the beginning; I was set up from eternity, and of old before the earth was made; the depths were not as yet, and I was already conceived" (Book of Proverbs viii). She also recalls to our memory the salutation with which the Archangel Gabriel greeted Mary: "Hail, full of grace." And then, on September 8th, exactly nine months after the Immaculate Conception, is kept the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady. The antiphons of the Divine Office announce: "This day was born the glorious Virgin Mary; and let us keep with rejoicing the birthday of the Blessed Virgin." Throughout the octave of the feast the subject of her descent from King David is treated of again and again, and the gospel for the feast is the genealogy of the Holy Family, given in the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. On November 21st, forty days later, is kept the feast of the Presentation of the child Mary in the Temple. In the office of this feast St. John Damascene tells us that: "Mary was carried to the Temple at Jerusalem and was there planted in the Lord; the dew of His Spirit made her to flourish in the courts of her God, and like a green olive she became a tree, so that all the doves of grace came and lodged in her branches." The next great event of our Lady's life is her espousal to St. Joseph. This important event the Liturgy celebrates by a feast on January 23. The reasons for her espousal are given by St. Bernard in the lessons of the second nocturn: "For this end did it behoove that Mary should be espoused to Joseph . . . that a husband might attest her maidenhood, that the modesty of the Virgin might be spared and her good fame saved. . . . By this device the heavenly secret was at the same time provided with its witness and protected from its foeman, and the good name of the maiden mother preserved."

On March 25, exactly nine months before Christmas day, the great feast of the Annunciation is kept. For, after Mary's espousals, God sent His angel to proclaim the mystery of the Incarnation and to announce to Mary her great dignity. Mary gave her consent, and the Word became incarnate. In the Liturgy all this is recalled. We hear the words: "Hail! Full of grace"; "Behold the handmaid of the Lord"; and the words of Isaias, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel"

(Isaias vii, 14). Then follows in natural order, close upon the feast of St. John the Baptist, the feast of the Visitation, to commemorate the memorable visit of our Lady to her cousin St. Elizabeth. We are reminded of all the incidents of that visit, of St. Elizabeth's greeting of Mary, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of the womb"; of the joy of the yet unborn Precursor at the presence of His Lord; of Mary's "Magnificat" of thanksgiving. As Christmas draws near and the time is approaching when the Saviour is to be born, the Church has given to us the feast of the "Expectation of Our Lady" on December 18, to recall the longing of that holy Mother for the advent of the Saviour of the world, and to stir up our desires for the coming of the Redeemer.

Then, on December 25, follows the great feast of the Nativity. This and the other feasts of the Incarnation, my brethren, are, of course, primarily feasts of our Lord. But it is very important that we should remember that, though our Lord is the prominent figure, yet Mary is also present, and that these feasts are further illustrations of her life. Thus, on Christmas day, the Liturgy does not forget Mary, the Mother. In it we meet frequently such thoughts as the following: "To-day the King of heaven deigned to be born to us of a Virgin"; "Blessed is the Virgin that deserved to carry in her womb Christ our Lord"; "The blessed Mother of God, Mary, remaining ever the spotless Virgin, hath this day given birth to the Saviour of the world." In the account of the Nativity given in the gospel for the midnight Mass, Mary's place in the mystery is clearly defined: "And it came to pass that when they were there her days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapt Him up in swaddling-clothes, and laid Him in a manger" (Luke ii). In the morning Mass, too, where the account of the Shepherds' visit to the cave is given from St. Luke: "And they found," we read, "Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in a manger . . . and all wondered at those things that were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart." We find the same characteristic in the Liturgy for the feasts of the Circumcision and the Epiphany. Thus the prayer for the Circumcision feast commences as follows: "O God, who by the fruitful virginity of blessed Mary, hast given to the world the rewards of eternal salvation." On the Epiphany feast the Gospel tells us of the search of the wise men for Him "who was born King of the Jews," and that

when they arrived at Bethlehem, "entering into the house, they found the Child with Mary, His Mother" (Matt. ii).

Forty days after the Nativity of Our Lord, according to the Law, Mary had to go up to the Temple and offer a sacrifice for her purification. By another ordinance of the Law every first-born son was to be considered as belonging to God, and had to be redeemed by an offering of six sickles. Hence the Liturgy gives us the feast of the Purification of Our Lady, and includes in it the presentation of the Divine Child. You will remember, my brethren, the touching incident, as recorded by St. Luke, of holy Simeon, who was "waiting for the consolation of Israel"; of the promise given to him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death until he had seen "the Christ of the Lord"; of his meeting Mary and the Child in the Temple, and of his "Nunc dimittis," because his eyes had seen the salvation "prepared before the face of all peoples" (St. Luke ii). The Liturgy of this feast presents all these touching recollections to us. Then follows the hidden life, of which there is so little recorded, and which naturally finds little place in the Liturgy. Mary does not, therefore, appear until the Passion is the subject of the Church's contemplation. Her share in the great tragedy is recalled by the feast of the Seven Dolours in Passion Week. When Christ is risen, Mary's work for Him on earth is finished. Her Son ascends to heaven and the promised Spirit is sent to take His place. There is a period of sad waiting for the bereaved Mother, and then her Son comes and takes her to that eternal home where she will be with Him for ever. This day of joyous triumph is recalled in August by the feast of Mary's Assumption. In this way, my brethren, does the Church set forth the life of Mary, the Mother of our Redeemer. The Liturgy not only describes her life as a series of *events,* but at the same time shows her virtues to us. We learn about her humility, her beautiful purity, her spirit of detachment, her love of Jesus, her patience under suffering. But the Church does not rest satisfied with this. All do not think on these mysteries and draw lessons for themselves; they will be better learned if they are repeated and taught expressly. Therefore, to make her children understand Mary better and to make them love her more, there are a number of feasts to draw their attention to certain virtues or prerogatives of Mary. Thus we find feasts in honor of the Most Pure Heart of Mary and of her purity, for there is no virtue which needs to be insisted upon so much as this angelic virtue of purity, and weak

men will find much help and encouragement in their struggles against impurity from the powerful help and beautiful example of Mary. There is a feast also in honor of her maternity, for the Church does not wish her children to forget that Jesus has bequeathed to them His own Mother, and as our Redeemer, when dying on the Cross, bade St. John "behold His Mother," so does she bid us turn to our Mother for help and care. Is anyone sad among you, my brethren? Has death come close to you and taken from you one very dear; or has misfortune made life bitter for you? Then remember that Mary was the Mother of Sorrows. The sword of sorrow pierced her to the heart, as foretold by holy Simeon. Nay! Seven sharp swords wounded her. Yet how sweet and patient she always was, how perfect an example of grace and beauty won by suffering. To remind sorrowing souls that they have a Mother who suffered herself, there is a second feast of the Dolours of Our Lady in September. Do you need help, my brethren? There are other feasts in which she is held up as the "help of Christians," the "Lady of Ransom," the "Lady of Perpetual Succor." In addition to these there is a feast to recall the most holy Name of Mary; and there are other feasts of local interest, or which commemorate signal manifestations of her favor.

III. My dear brethren, those who have not the blessing of the true faith wonder at this great devotion of Catholics to the Mother of Jesus Christ. The year, from beginning to end, resounds with her praises; her name is invoked in any emergency, and her praises form the ever-recurring theme of the Catholic pulpit. This is to those who do not understand our position, a cause of scandal. This should not be the case. For is it not clear, my brethren, from what I have said that her life and virtues are really part of the scheme of the Incarnation and Redemption, and that her life is so interwoven with that of her Son that they cannot be separated. If we recall the prophecies of the Old Testament and review the accounts of the Incarnation in the New, we shall find that Mary is part of the Divine scheme. When sin came into the world it came through the disobedience of Adam; and Eve, the partner given to him by God, shared in that sin. As both man and woman had brought ruin upon the earth, it was the Divine plan that the Son of God, when He came to earth to redeem the world, should have associated with Him a woman. This place of the woman in redemption is clearly foretold in the Old Testament. In the Book of Genesis we

read: "And the Lord God said to the serpent: 'I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt be in wait for her heel'" (Gen. iii, 13-15). In the seventh chapter of the prophet Isaias we have the following clear prophecy: "The Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel" (Isaias vii, 14). And in the eleventh chapter of the same prophet we are told that: "There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root." The *rod* evidently refers to Mary, and the *flower* to her divine Son. The Canticle of Canticles, too, and other parts of the Old Testament are full of passages which the Church, in the Breviary and Missal, applies in an accommodated sense to Mary.

In the New Testament we find most clear evidence for the position we claim for Mary. Recall, my brethren, the account of the Annunciation of the Incarnation by the Angel Gabriel, as given by St. Luke (Luke i, 26, 38). Mary is hailed by the angel as "full of grace"; she is told she shall conceive and shall bring forth a Son; and that she must call His name Jesus. When Mary asks: "How shall this be done? because I know not man"; the angel tells her that the Holy Ghost shall come upen her, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow her. Mary is satisfied: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." Again, an angel appearing in sleep to Joseph, said: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost; and she shall bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus" (Matt. i, 18-21). St. Elizabeth, "filled with the Holy Ghost," greeted Mary: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb. And whence is it to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke i, 42-43). These examples, my brethren, show that Mary was specially prepared by the Holy Spirit for her sublime office. In the words of her own Magnificat, God regarded her humility, and from henceforth all generations shall call her blessed. And afterwards in the different narratives of our Lord's life, we always find that in the great events there is a place for Mary. St. Luke, speaking of the birth of our Lord, says: "She brought forth her first-born Son and wrapped Him up in swaddling-clothes, and laid Him in a manger." Again we read that the shepherds "found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in the manger" (Luke ii, 16). You

will remember also, my brethren, the prophecy of Simeon, when Mary presented her Son in the Temple: "And Simeon said to Mary: 'Behold, this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce" (Luke ii, 34-35). Later we read how Jesus went down with His parents to Nazareth and "was subject to them" (Luke ii, 51).

Can we understand Bethlehem unless we consider the Child is tended by His Mother? Would Nazareth, the ideal home we love to meditate on, be the same if we found not there the sweet-faced gentle mother? Does it not mean very much that Jesus had a mother; does not it imply many beautiful virtues, the example of which we need; does it not prove to us that God has indeed become a man—a brother unto us? Can we understand in any true way the period of Christ's life which preceded His public life, unless it is knit with that of His Mother in our thoughts and affections?

Though during the public life, that close intercourse of Mother and Son was of necessity broken, yet when Jesus came to the supreme act of His life, when He was dying for His people, when He was left deserted in His hour of seeming defeat, the beloved disciple, one of the few faithful ones, tells us that "there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother" (John xix, 25). Do we understand Calvary, my brethren, unless Mary is at the foot of the Cross?

It is clear, then, that both in prophecy and in fulfillment Jesus and Mary are united together. When, therefore, we recall that the Church of God has, during the course of centuries, unfolded the riches of the Incarnation to her children in a glorious Liturgy, we may be certain that in that Liturgy there will be a place for Mary. And, indeed, this is the case, as I have shown. We find that not only are the incidents of the life of Jesus commemorated, but that each of the privileged souls who were united with Him during His life on earth have also their place in this descriptive setting forth and commemoration of the Incarnation. Thus the incidents of St. John the Baptist's life are commemorated, and those of St. Joseph and of the Apostles, but above all of Mary. Jesus and Mary are hand-in-hand in the Liturgy, as they were in reality.

My brethren, the life of Jesus Christ on earth was not lived alone, and it cannot be truly understood by those who banish from His side those saintly souls and gracious influences with which He surrounded Himself. His life was a social life, a life such as we

ourselves live. It would lose much of its power of touching our hearts, much of its influence and applicability as an example, and therefore almost all its efficacy as a regenerating influence for all time, had it been lived alone in heights of holiness above the lives of men. Therefore Jesus Christ did not wish to live such a life. He chose for Himself a Mother whom He could love and obey, and who would care for Him, thus leaving an example to the world of the domestic virtues. He surrounded Himself with friends whom He influenced and raised by word and example, and to whom He was loyal in spite of their many shortcomings. He endured poverty, ingratitude, insult, and injury in order to teach his children patience and peace amidst the trials of life. There are many, alas! who make Jesus Christ stand alone, with the result that He who wished to be a father, friend, and example to men, is to them unreal, abstract, and apart from their lives. The Catholic Church has never treated Jesus Christ in this way. Whilst reverencing His divinity, she remembers his humanity, and loves to recall every incident of His life on earth and to know and be familiar with those whom He chose as His associates. Above all does she love to recall His Mother. And there has grown up around the Son and His Mother a warm-hearted devotion which is nothing less than real human affection. This is fed by Liturgy and ceremonies during the course of each year until the thoughts and affections of those who follow the Church's guidance become knit inseparably with Jesus and Mary. Mary is called the "Mother of fair love." When she stands beside her Son in the people's affection there can be no puritanical coldness, but she will make them feel that they are indeed her children and the brothers of her divine Son. As she presented the divine Child to the shepherds and to the wise men from the East, so does she show Him to us in all His loving human aspects. As a true understanding of the Incarnation is not possible if we separate the Mother from the Son, let us, my brethren, take every opportunity of increasing our love for her that is supplied by the devotional system of the Church. There are all her glorious feasts which present to us each year her life and graces; there is the month of Mary, during which the children gather more frequently and with more conscious affection round their mother; there is the month of the holy Rosary, when we make use of that wonderful meditation upon the different mysteries connected with the Incarnation, speaking to the Mother in the familiar words of the "Hail Mary," whilst

we contemplate the mystery. But in following the round of her feasts, my brethren, let me exhort you to accept the guidance of the Church. Do you want to know what sentiments of devotion you should have? Learn from the Liturgy of the Church. Do you want prayers to express your devotion which are most beautiful and most authentic? You will find them in the Liturgy. Do you wish for a complete commentary on the life of Mary and a Breviary of her praises? Again, my brethren, I urge you to use the Liturgy.

Mary is living in the Church and is exerting her influence over those souls who catch the reflection of her beautiful virtues. She is one of ourselves, my brethren, human and not divine, and she translates into language we can understand the virtues of her Son. She is a model to the human race. The virtues to be seen in her are the virtues that will save the world, and it is therefore of the greatest importance to the world that she should be known and loved. She will bring men to her Son. It is the Church which shows men how Mary is to be remembered and gives to them a beautiful Liturgy in which her virtues are set forth for their meditation, and by following this Liturgy we can all, my brethren, live our lives in company with Jesus and Mary, ever contemplating their example, and ever learning more and more to reflect the virtues in our own souls which we see in them.

L. FEASTS OF THE SAINTS

BY THE RIGHT REV. JOHN S. VAUGHAN, D.D.

"God is wonderful in His saints."—Ps. lxvii, 36.

SYNOPSIS.—The force of example in the spiritual life. The Church presents us with concrete examples of every condition and description in her efforts to lift us above the world. The world's estimate of sanctity—our own view of it—the value of sanctity according to Scripture. Its value estimated from the lot of the saints in heaven. This should fill us with envy—what was possible for them is possible for us. They were human in the full sense of the word as we are. They used the means to the end and thus succeeded. The example of the saints helps us to know ourselves, fills us with humility; their life-story gives us courage and confidence. Grace given to them is ready for us. Read their lives, follow their example and thus prepare for eternity.

The doctrine taught by Jesus Christ is found to be difficult and exceedingly distasteful to the natural man. Now, the Church well knows that it is far easier for her children to learn it by example than by the solemn enunciation of dry precept. The abstract truth one may indeed admire, but it makes little appeal to the sluggish will. We approve and applaud, and then pass on our way, and soon forget the impression it has made. But, when the same truth is presented to us in the concrete, it arrests our attention, and fills us with holy desires. So that when we witness the conduct of holy men, we are inclined to exclaim, with the great Bishop of Hippo, "Why should not we do as these have done?" When we can look upon men and women of the world, practicing heroic virtue, and leading noble and self-denying lives, we soon begin to realize that Sanctity is not an exotic of another clime, but a plant of earthly growth, and that, so far from being unattainable, it may be secured by anyone who is thoroughly determined to do his best to make it his own.

Hence, it is that the Church, in her wisdom, and with her intimate knowledge of human nature, is careful to put before us, day by day, all the year through, some one or another of her great canonized saints. One day, perhaps, it is a mighty warrior or a sturdy soldier, like St. Sebastian, who contrived to lead a life of heroic sanctity amid the clash of arms and the din and smoke of battle. And who felt as conscious of the presence of God, and as near to Him, while

resting in His tent, or shouldering His arms, as if He were kneeling before the tabernacle or assisting at Mass.

Another day, she will summon before us the venerable figure of some holy Pope, like St. Gregory, or St. Pius V., who rose to a condition of the most exalted virtue in the midst of his innumerable duties, cares and responsibilities, and his solicitude for all the churches. The following day, perhaps, we celebrate the feast of some obscure virgin or cloistered nun, such as St. Teresa, or St. Clare who, urged by a supernatural impulse, turned their backs altogether on the world and on all its empty vanities, that they might dedicate the whole of their time and thought and affection to Him, whom they had learned to love exclusively and above all. Like some beautiful flower, in an enclosed garden, they grew in grace and loveliness, fostered and nourished by Him alone, who "feeds among the lilies," and "whose delight it is to be with the children of men."

Sometimes the Church may invite us to contemplate a more homely scene, and will disclose for our wonder and admiration, the inner life of some rich married lady, like St. Monica, or St. Elizabeth, whose burning love of God was shown in her assiduous attention to the most ordinary duties of her state, and in the religious discharge of her obligations toward husband and children. In short, the examples which the Church puts before us for our encouragement and edification range from world-famed sovereigns, ruling over mighty kingdoms, right down to the poorest and most despised beggars, who, though destitute of this world's goods, were passing rich in the only lasting and solid riches of heaven. Thus, while on the one hand, we honor as saints King Edward of England and King Louis of France, we also honor and revere quite as sincerely and as devoutly such saints as St. Isidor, who was a common laborer, and St. Benedict Labré, who used to beg his bread from door to door, like the most destitute outcast of the present day.

Thus, during the passing year, our mother, the Church, draws our attention not to the mere dry precept of the law, but to its practical expression, as witnessed in the lives of her most illustrious children. In the saints we see the noblest and the highest counsels of perfection actually carried out. Furthermore, we recognize in them our fellow Christians, and our fellow citizens, formed of the same clay and fashioned in the same mold as ourselves; flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood. We watch them contending with the same difficulties, beset by the same spiritual enemies, exposed

to the same dangers, and a prey to the same evil inclinations and passions. Yet, in spite of all this, we find them steadfast, resolute and conquering all along the line. And, as we follow them, step by step, and see them winning their battles and triumphing over their foes, not indeed by virtue of their own power, but by the grace and help of God, we are fully aware that the divine assistance, which was accorded to them will be as readily accorded to us. God's hands are not shortened, His ability as well as His readiness to help is as great in our case as in theirs. In short, our only legitimate excuse, if we fail, is that we have neither the generosity nor the courage that characterized them. So far from imitating their zeal and earnestness and strong determination to become saints at any price, and cost what it may, we will scarcely move one little finger, or strain one little muscle, even for the sake of winning an eternal crown.

The wise merchant in the Gospel, who, after much time and trouble, found the pearl of great price, became so enamoured with it that he sold all that he had in order to secure possession of it. He did not stop to consider how much the price was. He did not strive to strike a bargain. He did not say he would take it, but only if it could be purchased at a small sum. No! His mind was at once made up, he would have it *at any price*. Consequently, he went off, and, without delay and without hesitation, sold everything he had and bought the precious pearl upon which his whole heart was set. If, dear brethren, we are to secure the heavenly treasure of Sanctity, we must approach the matter in the same spirit. There must be no hesitancy, no putting off, no balancing of consequences, no doubting and faltering. We must be fully persuaded that Sanctity is worth all that we can offer for it. Or, rather, that it so surpasses in value all the riches of the universe, that we ought to exclaim with the wise man: "I preferred it before kingdoms and thrones, and esteem riches as nothing in comparison to it. Neither did I compare unto it any precious stone, for all gold in comparison to it is as a little sand; and silver in respect to it shall be counted as clay. I loved it above health and beauty, and chose to have it instead of light, for its light cannot be put out. And all good things come to me together with it, and innumerable riches through it" (Wisdom vii, 8). It is only when we have appreciated Sanctity, at its proper value, that we shall be prepared to pay the necessary price for its possession.

Now, nothing so helps us to realize its value as a serious consideration of the joys and delights which are now the lot and portion of the saints of heaven. We picture them to ourselves amid the splendors and the peace of their eternal home. We watch them exulting before the throne of God, drinking the torrent of His delights, and basking in the bright sunshine of His joy-giving presence. We call to mind their perfect peace, their unfading glory, their freedom from all care and sorrow, their indescribable contentment, and absolute security. We compare the brief moment of their earthly pilgrimage with the endless duration of their acquired joy, we contrast the few short years in which they labored and toiled with the immense weight of glory which those few short years have purchased. We wonder at the insignificance and smallness of the service rendered on the one hand, and the wholly inconceivable magnificence of the recompense received on the other. And the more we ponder and the more we learn of their privileges and honors, the more our wonder grows and intensifies, until, at last, we are filled with a burning envy and we resolve to emulate their example, to walk in their footsteps and to imitate their virtues.

We call to mind the efforts which worldlings make to acquire the worthless riches of this world, we think of their laborious days, of their watchful nights, and of the pains and fatigues to which they cheerfully submit, in order to increase their earthly gains, or to acquire some long-desired honor, or to rise a degree or two in the social scale, and our cheeks grow scarlet with shame and self-reproach, to think that we, who call ourselves Catholics, should be all the while so listless and indifferent regarding the infinitely more admirable rewards of eternity.

What we once regarded as insurmountable difficulties in the path of virtue, melt away so soon as we become better acquainted with the saints of God. Of old, we were want to excuse our tepid life and our feeble attempts at virtue, on the ground of our particular position, or of our evil surroundings, or of the wickedness of the period in which our lot is cast. Or we would find excuse in the difficulties connected with our special duties, and in the trying nature of our environment. But, so soon as we set before us the immense multitude of the saints, we perceive how great is our delusion. For, amongst that glorious host are to be found saints of every walk of life, of every position, of every class and of every variety.

Nay, more, we find both men and women steadily growing to per-

fection, and advancing in virtue, and attaining to heroic holiness, whose position and surroundings were immeasurelessly more difficult than our own. Often their passions were more violent, and their enemies more persistent, and their chances less, and their obstacles more serious than any which have ever fallen to our experience. But—as a set-off against this—it is only fair to say that they had one quality that is wanting in us. One quality, without which all else is of very little avail. They had an irresistible resolution; a deep-set and indomitable will, which was discouraged by no difficulty, and dismayed by no obstacle. They conquered and reached the goal, because they were determined to do their best, to push on to the end, and never to lose courage nor give up the struggle. So long as they made a generous use of the means at their disposal, they knew they were secure. So long as they were faithful to prayer and the Sacraments, and trusted to God alone as the one source of all their strength, they knew, as we all know, that they were bound to win. God has promised to give His grace to all who ask it with humility and perseverance, and to bestow even His greater graces upon those who are found to correspond to His ordinary graces. Who is faithful over few things, He will place over many things. But if we are too indifferent to act up to the ordinary graces God showers down upon us, we thereby render ourselves altogether undeserving of His choicer gifts, without which heroic sanctity is impossible. It is here where we usually fail. We wish to run before we are able to stand upright; to soar along in the high spiritual altitudes before we have even practised the art of ordinary walking on even ground.

The example of the saints, however, serves not only to inspire us with a holy longing to follow them in their lives of virtue, and to merit the reward which they now enjoy. It also helps us to know ourselves better, and to keep us humble and lowly in our own eyes.

So long as we compare ourselves only with worldly minded persons and with those who make no pretense to keep the commandments, we may easily rise from the task, quite satisfied with the result. For, if we compare our own lives with those who have never had the grace nor the opportunities that we have had, and who have never been instructed, nor helped by the Sacraments, nor shielded in any way from the occasions of sin, we shall, naturally, look virtuous enough against such a dark background. Consequently, we shall be apt to flatter ourselves that all is well, and to

take complacency in our own good deeds, and to "imagine ourselves to be something, whereas we are nothing." We are so weak and so blind, and so full of self-love, that the slightest favor conferred upon us by God, or the least success in our spiritual exercises, or the smallest light or unction received by us in prayer, is at once accepted by us as a mark of special virtue. Our poor mortifications, our little acts of penance, our hour of daily meditation, our patience under some slight provocation, are all enough to flatter our vanity and to inflate us with an utterly erroneous estimate of our own spiritual condition.

Then, perhaps, we are induced to take up the history of some genuine saint. We turn over the pages with interest and admiration, and, as we read on and on, new light seems to be given us, and we soon find ourselves contemplating virtues, in whose light our own seem to lose caste, and to dwindle into puerile insignificance. When we are thus, as it were, brought into contact with a true saint, a healthy sense of our own inferiority takes possession of us. We grow ashamed of our very virtues, which, by comparison, scarcely look like virtues at all, and we begin to confess, painfully and sorrowfully, that, after all, we are not humble, nor charitable, nor patient, nor pure, but only poor and unworthy sinners, loaded with imperfections, and full of innumerable faults and failings. In the person of a canonized saint, we have a proper standard of comparison. We can measure ourselves with him, and thus gain a far truer estimate of our true spiritual misery than we are ever likely to acquire in any other way. The study of the lives of the saints teaches us, indeed, to realize our short-comings, and our many failings, and steeps us deeper and deeper in humility, and we must all admit that sanctity is very near those who are lowly and the humble of heart.

But, in spite of the newly acquired sense of our weakness and sinfulness and general inferiority, we are not, strange to say, dejected nor downcast. On the contrary, familiarity with the lives of God's greatest servants, greatly contributes to inspire us with courage and confidence. The reason is plain. For, in the saints we contemplate the transforming power of God's grace upon weak human creatures just like ourselves. We may gaze upon the fairest and most perfect amongst them. Yet, however exalted they may be, so soon as we call to mind their origin and history, we find they were born of earthly parents like ourselves, and inherited the very same

natural instincts and earthly disposition and evil passions. They possessed the same nature and were subject to the same influences. Before them, as before us, the world spreads its subtle snares, and the flesh its seductive attractions, and the devil his most cunning decoys and pitfalls. There was in them the same attractions toward honors, distinctions, pleasures and sensual delights, as well as the same natural shrinking from pain and contempt and humiliation. In a word, they were men, and possessed all the customary inborn weaknesses of their race. Yet they triumphed! They overcame every difficulty, trod under foot every obstacle, and lived almost like angels in human bodies. Not, be it ever remembered, by virtue of their own strength, not by virtue of any peculiarity of their composition or organization, but solely by the efficacy and strength of God's all-sufficient grace. Grace was offered to them, and because they corresponded to it with great fidelity, it was poured out upon them in far greater abundance. It illuminated their intellects, it inflamed their wills, it showed them the emptiness of worldly glory, it lifted their thoughts toward heavenly things, and made them long to tread the world and all it contains under foot, that they might merit the reward of the saints. So utterly, indeed, did many of them despise this world, that they preferred its enmity to its friendship, and rejoiced to be unknown and forgotten by men, that they might lose themselves more completely in God.

None are so brave as the saints! They dare all things, and endure all things, for the sake of Him, whom they love above all. Neither danger nor disgrace, nor torture nor death itself, in its worst form, nor aught else can influence them, nor turn them from their allegiance to the God they love, nor make them forgetful of His service. Who, with such examples to inspire him, can fail to be impressed! Who can fail to feel encouraged? To inspire ourselves, then, with hope and trust, let us lift up our eyes on high, and contemplate them rejoicing in eternal bliss. As the husbandman plowing the rude earth, and exposing himself to the wintry blasts and to the inclemencies of the elements, buoys himself up with the thought of the future harvest, and of the fields, rich and beautiful with golden corn; or, as the captain, tossing on the turbulent, restless ocean, battling with storms and hurricanes, and the numberless other dangers of the deep, comforts himself with the remembrance of the reward, which will be his when he at last brings his rich cargo to land, so should we look up from our daily

struggle and toil in the service of God and contemplate the magnificent recompense awaiting us in the kingdom of our Father.

Life is passing; swiftly and silently the years glide by, and soon we shall find our fragile bark grating upon the eternal shore. Are we preparing for that solemn and awful hour? The time is short and we should, therefore, neglect no means of grace and salvation. Now, one of the simplest and, at the same time, one of the most efficatious and agreeable, is the habit of reading the lives of the saints.

To keep their example ever before our eyes, to fill our minds with their thoughts and sentiments, and to strive to see things and to judge things as they did, will carry us over every difficulty, and will enable us, one day, to secure a place among their own glorious ranks, in the land of eternal peace and cloudless joy.

Amen.

LI. THE ANGELS IN THE LITURGY

BY THE REV. J. W. SULLIVAN

"You are come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels."—Heb. xii, 22.

SYNOPSIS.—The scriptural revelation of the angels. The lessons drawn from this revelation. The tradition of the Church in reference to the angels—its origin. The development of the doctrine. The various feasts and their lessons. The moral and doctrinal teachings of the liturgy of the Mass of the angels. The mission of the angels. How they assist us. The practical value of the veneration paid to the angels.

The Holy Scriptures are not merely a revelation concerning God and man. They are as truly a revelation concerning the angels. The main facts of their history are revealed to us—the original contest between the good and the evil angels—the difference as to the present condition of the heavenly hosts who "keep their first estate," and of the others who fell—the consequent future destiny of satan and his followers and, on the other hand, of the faithful who, now glorious in bliss, will hereafter be raised to a yet higher state through the glory of the Incarnate Son. The appearances of angels extend through the Scriptures. They people the scenes of the sacred history. They are not more clearly seen around the gates of Paradise at the beginning of man's history, than they are represented as about to be present at the close, on the day of the final resurrection and universal judgment. They are as fully concerned with the events of the Apocalypse of St. John as they are with the events of the Book of Genesis. The Scripture history of mankind opens with the angels already on the stage of this lower world, actively engaged. It is revealed that they will be as actively engaged when it has run its predestined course.

Under the old law, the action of angels, as revealed to us, was on a large scale, affecting the concerns of nations and kingdoms, and of families connected with the patriarchal line through which the Messias was to come. Under the new law, as contrasted with the old, we find our blessed Lord speaking of all His members, all His little ones, and saying, "That their angels in heaven always see

the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. xviii, 10). And the Epistle to the Hebrews unfolds yet further this great revelation when it speaks of the angels as "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall receive the inheritance of salvation" (Heb. i, 14). It is this same universality of individual privilege that the apostle asserts in our text.

On these pregnant passages the Church has grounded her traditionary faith. And these momentous words of the Master and His apostle have led her to work the worship of angels into the warp and woof of her liturgy. The heiress of all true traditions, she has ennobled and consecrated this worship from her origin.

While the existence of these higher and purely spiritual beings formed part of the religious belief of the Jews, no worship was paid directly by the synagogue. Nor was there an official cult or regular part of the liturgy set aside for the angels in the first centuries of Christianity. It would seem that, as a tendency to the false worship of angels developed itself even in the apostolic age, possibly on this account, a reserve was kept as to the greatness of the obligations to these blessed guardians, lest in the instruments and agents of the divine care the constant sense of the Supreme Author of life should be lost.

But the true veneration of these eternal spirits, whose daily care, watchful protection, ceaseless countless ministeries of love and power are around every child of God's eternal adoption, existed in St. Paul's day and grew out of the precious words of Jesus and His apostles. When we think of what these words revealed, the intense interest and care in the charge of souls in whom God dwells—the individuality of it, the like care extended to each, its unceasingness from the font to the grave, through the grave to heaven, is it wonderful that the fathers of the East and the West should urge the people to invoke the protection of the hosts of the good angels, whom God appointed to their several posts, to occupy themselves about the elements, and the heavens, and the world? Is it surprising that long before a special place in the liturgy was given them, that temples and festivals should be dedicated to the honor of those spirits who, like the angels in the dream of sleeping Israel, were ascending and descending with the prayers of the faithful? Their worship was originally incorporated with all the public prayers and, consequently, with all the festivals in the early Church. With them, as with the blessed Trinity, the Eucharist and all the saints,

there was a general festival in their honor before the development of the liturgy assigned special solemnities. But when men were no longer tempted to give divine honor to creatures, when the true idea of the worship due to God had been well grounded, then the fulness of gratitude was shown toward those heavenly spirits who strengthen the Church in her trials as they strengthened her Master in His agony, who minister unto her children as they "came and ministered unto Him." Back in the fifth century that feeling of reverence and gratitude finds its expression in the numerous churches dedicated to the angels, and in the feasts which honored them; that sense of dependence and of needed aid invoked the archangels Michael and Gabriel immediately after the persons of the Trinity. In the present form of the liturgy, the Church permits the use of the names of only the three archangels who are mentioned in Holy Scripture. St. Michael was the first of the angels to enjoy special veneration. He who hurled the rebel angels into the abyss by the irresistible power of the name of God. The prince of the heavenly hosts has two festivals, one on May 8, dating back to the fifth century, in honor of his apparition on Monte Gargano, and the second on the 29th of September, in honor of the dedication of the Church of St. Michael in Rome. St. Raphael, the kind and gentle messenger from heaven to Tobias is commemorated on the 24th of October, and on March 18th St. Gabriel, who was entrusted by the Almighty with the commission to announce to Mary her election as the Mother of God, and the advent of the long-looked for Messias. These glorious missions and these wonderful achievements of the three archangels are set forth in the Mass and the office for each of them. Their history, blazoned in the pages of our liturgy, yields to the hymn of petition: "May Michael, the angel of peace, come from heaven into this our temple, and, bringing us sweet peace, drive dismal war back to hell. May Gabriel, the angel of strength, come and rout our old enemies; may he often visit the heaven-loved temples which the triumphant Jesus has placed throughout the world. May Raphael, heavenly physician, descend and visit us, that he may heal all that are infirm, and direct our steps that falter, in the path of life." They are separate festivals, but the animating spirit of them all finds expression in the using of the same Introit, the same Communion, and the same Offertory. "Bless the Lord all ye His angels." "All ye angels of the Lord bless the Lord." So the Introit and the Communion at once unite

us in the bonds of charity and brotherhood with those heavenly beings, bring us into their company at the feet of God's throne, there to join with them in the worship of God.

The Offertory conveys a lesson all its own, "an angel stood near the altar of the temple having a golden censer in his hand, and there was given him much incense, and the smoke of the perfumes ascended before God." Here is the summing of our instrumentality. Of all the various ways in which man employs himself here, look into that censer and mark which of them it is that reaches heaven. When the clamors of prayerless zeal, which have dazzled and astounded men, have spent their force, mark what is left in the censer, only that which partakes of the nature of prayer. This is all that lives to reach the skies, all that heaven receives from earth, all that is ever permitted to ascend before God. To these days in honor of the archangels the most beautiful and touching of all the feasts has been added. Springing up in the sixteenth century the Feast of the Guardian Angels rapidly spread throughout the Church until now it is observed universally on the second day of October, with the same Introit, Offertory and Communion that is used in the other Masses.

This day, too, has commemoration of the special duties of our guardians. In the Collect, we pray God that we may be continually defended by their protection, and may rejoice eternally in their society. The Gradual speaks of their office: "God hath given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." It is theirs to guard the steps of the faithful from harm, to keep them from the assaults of evil men or evil angels, who are as bent on seducing and misleading as the good angels in guarding; to whisper good thoughts to their hearts, as satan and his instruments whisper evil; for such power have the superior created beings in their silent mysterious converse with us; though God's holy spirit alone can directly influence the will by His quickening power, and enable to close with the good and reject the evil.

This feast brings us into the company of many thousands of angels, for one member cannot be honored without the honor being communicated to all other members of the same body. "If one member rejoices," says St. Paul, "all the others rejoice with it" (I. Cor. xii, 26). The desire of the Church is that we honor the angels in a spirit of unity and universality considering them all

one body, the Body of Jesus Christ and this spirit is engendered also in the other parts of the liturgy.

In the Book of Ecclesiastes, the royal preacher directs to "keep our foot" when approaching the house of God, to avoid all unseemly conduct, and offering "the victims of fools"; and among the reasons for caution he mentions the presence of "the Angel" who witnesses the rash vow and the unguarded word, and who will not readily accept the excuse of "error" or pardon the wanton irreverence (Ecc. lv, 17; v, 1-6). And in accord with this we find St. Paul laying down directions for the decent order of Christian worship "because of the angels" (I. Cor. xi, 2-10) who were present and who observed the habit and demeanor of the men and women gathered for sacred purposes there. And when we at the altar offer up the One Great Sacrifice by which all things in heaven and earth are reconciled, the "lifting up of our hearts," which, in the language of the Church from the beginning, is there proclaimed, is but a preparation for the solemn Eucharistic Act, where immediately afterward we join "angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim and all the court of heaven," in lauding and magnifying that thrice Holy Name—the Lord God of hosts. And that presence of high and blessed spirits, which we then are specially called to realize when the all-gracious but awful mysteries of redemption are before us, belongs to every part of Christian worship, of which that is the principal and crowning act. The etherial glorious beings, there marking us, are those who rest neither day nor night in God's service, yet fold their wings and hide their faces in dreadful reverence when approaching the majesty of the Lord God of Hosts, when proclaiming His Holy Name, and taking the words of His awful praise into their clean and sinless lips. And when at High Mass the incense is blessed, we beg St. Michael to intercede in our behalf, that as "this incense ascends to the Lord as an odor of sweetness so may His mercy descend upon us; that no unguarded word may escape our lips, that our heart may never incline to evil." When we kneel to confess our sins before the Holy Sacrifice is offered, in the Confessional before Communion, and on so many ocasions in the administration of the Sacraments, is not the archangel in the court of those we summon to receive our acknowledgment of guilt? Is he not among those powerful ones whom we ask to pray to the Lord God for us? When Mass has ended the last prayer before leaving the church is that this same great archangel Michael may defend us in battle and

be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. And, again, in the litany of the saints "that long, deep sigh of the Church on earth toward her sister, the Church in heaven," we plead for the good offices of those same burning spirits who surround God's throne, as we plead for the intercession of the saints. At Compline, the evening prayer of the Church "when the daylight dies away," what a beautiful petition is sent up to God. "Visit, we beseech Thee, O Lord, this habitation, and drive from it all snares of the enemy; let Thine holy angels dwell herein, to keep us in peace, and may Thy blessing be always upon us." There is no service of worship in the Church for the use of which the liturgy does not prescribe the "Our Father." Does it not summon us into the company of so many thousands of angels? "Thy will be done as it is in heaven." And done by whom in heaven? By no other than the holy angels; for these alone bear the character of God's servants and executors of His will in those celestial mansions. The picture of their unwearied obedience, the willing devotion of their minds to God, is what we need to quicken ours, to bring our dispositions and lives to that healthy communion with the spiritual creation, that God's wishes may be accomplished in us and by us. Such is the prayer the Church ever offers in her liturgy and with which she maintains the warfare against the world of carnal sense and irreligion. When sickness is heavy upon us and the priest comes to administer the last Sacraments, what prayer does the liturgy put upon his lips but that "Our holy Father almighty and everlasting God may vouchsafe to send His holy angel to guard, cherish, protect, visit and defend all that dwell in this house?"

If they are active in our behalf during the days of our warfare, the prayers of the Church show them no less energetic in our behalf when our wearied eyes have closed upon a weary world. Read the Offertory in the Mass for the dead: "O Lord Jesus deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from the pains of hell . . . let the standard-bearer, St. Michael, bring them into the holy light." And as the last office of the holy angels toward the faithful, we read in Christ's own parable, that, when they leave this world in His faith and fear, they are "carried by the angels in Abraham's bosom," so the prayer of the Church: "may the angels lead thee into paradise. May the choir of angels receive thee." "May God assign His holy angel to keep thy grave." "May He give you a place among the angel choirs." That such "as are heirs of salvation"

may be borne by these pure and blessed spirits to rejoin their faithful predecessors in the realms of rest, to await in assured bliss with the patriarchs and the apostles with "the spirits of the just made perfect," the fuller felicity that will be theirs when the elect of God shall be finally gathered together by Christ at His coming and their portion fixed at the judgment, in the beatific vision of God.

When, therefore, we consider the angelic host in the regularity, as well as the rapidity, of their angelic movement, like the living wheels of Ezechial's vision, ever accomplishing the purpose of Him who sways and directs all; when we survey them in their several orders and hierarchies—the swift cherubim, the flaming seraphim, the "thrones, principalities and powers and dominions" as their several ranks are described in Holy Writ; when we read of them in the Prophet Daniel as set over the kingdom of men, or marshaled under their archangels, as Michael, the Prince, or Gabriel, the Power of God, or see them hanging with concentrated gaze upon the Babe as He lies in His manger, our minds, which might be dazzled by the contemplation, are chastened and corrected by the thoughts suggested in the liturgy, that they are with us servants of the Most High; and that we are brought by the economy of redemption, as the apostle declares, into a strict and proper fellowship with them, and so we can rejoice in their "joy over one sinner that repenteth; in "their care of the little ones" of Christ and in their last office of love to the departing souls of the elect, carried "by the angels" into Paradise.

Our mission in the world is, together with the holy angels, and through their aid, to uphold the cause of God against the evil powers which oppose Him, to be jealous of His honor, to be zealous of His commands. In our blessed Lord, our true representative, in the wilderness of temptation, ministered to by angels, and assaulted by Satan, we see the renewed man, we see our present lot. Surrounded on all sides by what tempts the eye, deceives the heart, captivates the senses, bewilders the understanding, shakes the faith, the loyalty, the steadfastness of our frail nature, we are subjected to our course of trial. But the angels are at our side, the liturgical prayers put upon our lips the call for aid from St. Michael, the standard-bearer, to lead us; St. Gabriel, the Power of God, to give us strength; St. Raphael, the Cure of God, to heal the wounds received in battle, and those blessed spirits of all orders to be at our side, above, around us those "twelve legions of angels" to uphold, to fortify, to pre-

serve us. Surely we may contemplate with gladness the wisdom of Mother Church who so constantly keeps before us the thought that we are in the "company of many thousands of angels"—ministers of grace, who long to have us as their companions in the presence of God. Thus girt about with angels, we are set to keep the charge of God. They are with us by our altars in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass; they are with us as we kneel in prayer; they are with us in the dangers of our way to keep us; they are by our beds to watch near us as we sleep. They are waiting to carry our souls into the presence of God. While we bear in our heart the consciousness of that presence in which "we live and move and have our being, and of the heavenly hosts around us, shall we not be strong to resist temptation? and should we fall we can turn for consolation and help to the fellowship of those angels who are all the while rejoicing over the "one sinner that repenteth," and with whom all thought is absolved in the one deep love and thanksgiving, which is being breathed into them out of the Heart of Jesus.

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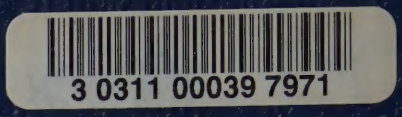
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